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Battery-operated train set. All line clear! Here comes the superfast express!



A child's best friends!

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* THE TURMOIL IN LANKA has not ended; Hanuman has still many surprises for the demons. Read in the *Story of Rama*.

* AMBER FORT: Story of the famous Rajput fort through pictures.

* A moving legend of India, a delightful anecdote through pictures in *Laughs From Many Lands*, some important questions on usage from readers answered in *Towards Better English* plus a bunch of absorbing stories and other features.



GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

अजरामरवत् प्राज्ञो विद्यामर्थं च चिन्तयेत् ।
गृहीत इव केशेषु मृत्युना धर्ममाचरेत् ॥

Ajarāmaravat prājño vidyāmarthaṁ ca cintayet

Gṛhīta iva keśeṣu mṛtyunā dharmamācāret

The wise should gather the wealth of knowledge (with such zeal) as if he would never age or die. But he must adhere to the path of righteousness (so strictly) as if death had already caught hold of him by the hair

—The *Hitopadeshah*

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Controlling Editor:
NAGI REDDI
Founder:
CHAKRAPANI

THE BURGLAR AND THE ANTHEM

A Member of Parliament narrated a significant incident in our Lok Sabha.

This happened in the U.S.A. A man saw a burglar entering his house. Instead of raising a cry, he suddenly switched on his tape-recorder and played the National Anthem.

At once the burglar stood at attention as a mark of respect for the Anthem. Consequently he was captured.

The judge acquitted the burglar, but fined the house-owner for misuse of the National Anthem.

The thief's conduct as well as the judge's decision stresses the same thing—how much respect the National Anthem deserves.

Thoughts to be Treasured

Independence means voluntary restraints and discipline, voluntary acceptance of the rule of law.

—Mahatma Gandhi

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NEWS FLASH



A Rival to Everest?

Mount Everest may not be the world's highest mountain if the measurement recorded by a U.S. satellite proves correct. According to it a Himalayan peak christened K-2 could be a little higher than the Everest. But this is not yet confirmed.

Search for the Mythical Dwarka

Is the legendary city of Dwarka, believed to have been founded by Sri Krishna and submerged afterwards, more than a legend? Explorations in the Gulf of Kutch and the Arabian Sea have proved that Dwarka was already a city three thousand and five hundred years ago. More explorations are continuing.



The Human Chimp

When Pratap of Jaipur decided to adopt five-month-old orphaned Radha, it was a challenge to him to rear her properly and make her behave like a human being. Today, Radha—the orphaned chimpanzee—can wear her clothes, take off a shirt and drink tea from a cup.

The Giant Lizard

An 18-foot lizard was recently sighted in the thick forest at Thalakona, 45 km west of Tirupati.

The Sri Venkateswara University Zoology Department, immediately sent some staff members to photograph the giant lizard.

Such a lizard was sighted last in India 30 years ago.



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STORY OF

RAMA



—By Manoj Das

(Hanuman arrived in Lanka after an adventurous journey through the clouds. His first encounter on the island was with the demoness Lankini, the guardian-spirit of Lanka. She conceded defeat. Hanuman, reducing himself to a handy size, freely moved, about in Ravana's castle, looking for Sita, until he discovered her in a garden. He began humming Rama's glory.)

TURMOIL IN LANKA-2

Sita was surprised. Who will recite Rama's name in the land of the hostile demons? She wondered, looking in all directions. Soon she saw Hanuman atop the tree, half-hidden in the foliage.

Hanuman climbed down to a lower branch and greeted Sita

with hands folded. He introduced himself as Rama's emissary. At first Sita did not know whether to believe her eyes or not; then she did not know whether to believe the stranger or not. Couldn't this be yet another trick by the demons to delude her?



But as Hanuman came near her, descending to a lower branch, Sita read in his eyes nothing but true devotion and joy of faithfulness.

And her doubts were completely set at rest when Hanuman presented to her the token Rama had given him.

She was anxious to know how Rama and Lakshmana fared. When assured by Hanuman that they were fine, she wondered why they had not yet taken any step to rescue her.

"Mother! How would they know where you are? Now that I have found you, in no time Rama will be here with batta-

lions of brave Vanaras," said Hanuman. He then narrated at some length how sad Rama was at her loss, how he shed tears the moment he saw a flower or fruit that was dear to her!

"O Hanuman, your words taste like nectar with drops of poison! They are nectar because they inform me that the two brothers are physically well; they are poison because they tell me how sad the two are!" said Sita.

"Mother, why not put an end to their sorrow as soon as possible? I can carry you across the sea to Rama without the least difficulty. Will you be pleased to



sit on my back?" Hanuman asked humbly.

Sita smiled. "How naive you are, my child!" she said and added, "How can a small creature like you carry my weight?"

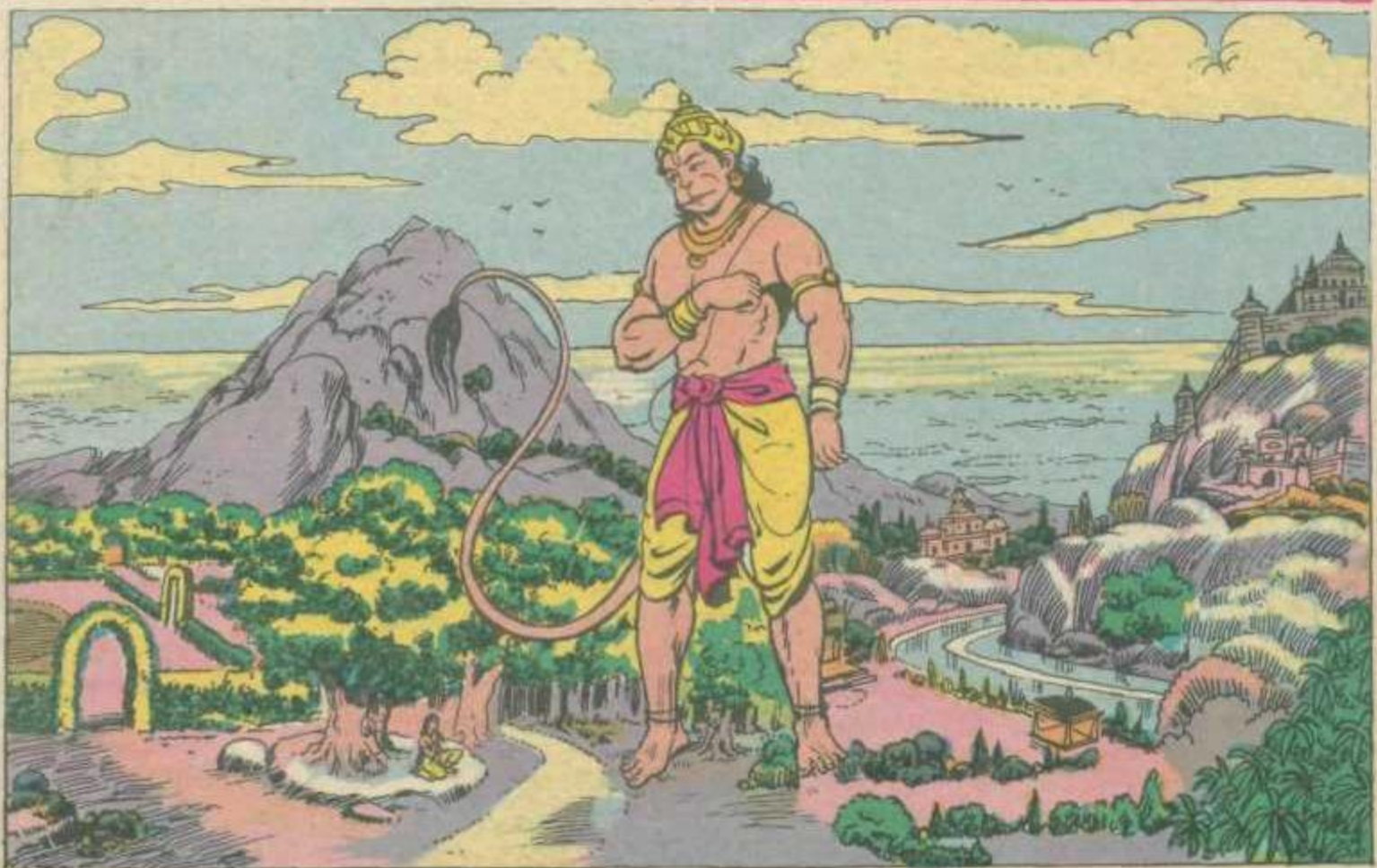
Hanuman who sat before Sita kneeling down, stood up. In silence he began to enlarge his body. Sita observed with awe and wonder as he grew taller than any tree in the garden, looking majestic and heroic.

He then returned to his earlier shape and bowed to Sita.

"Do you believe, O Mother, that I was not boasting in vain?" said Hanuman.

Moved with affection, Sita

said, "You're true to your word. Even then, my son, it may not be wise on my part to follow your advice in this regard. First of all, I may fall off your back when you speed like a hurricane. Secondly, some of the demons who are crafty wizards will surely fly up and try to dislodge me. You will find it difficult to combat their attack and to keep flying and to protect me at the same time. But what is more, Rama's prestige is involved here. Ravana behaved like a thief when he kidnapped me. Should I escape in the same manner? No, it will be in fitness of things only if Rama defeats





Ravana in an open battle and rescues me.”

Hanuman appreciated Sita's sentiments. “Mother, give me a token by which Rama will be sure that I have indeed found you and nobody else,” he said.

Sita brought out a gem, one of the few she still had on her person, and gave it to Hanuman. “To convince my husband of the fact that you had met none other than myself, you can even make him recollect an incident which nobody except he and I knew. One day I was attacked by a crow while we resided on Mount Chitracut.

The naughty bird flew away,

but it returned to me once again while I lay asleep, my head resting on Rama's lap. The crow pecked at me letting my blood flow. Infuriated, Rama spotted the bird and at once knew that it was a supernatural being in the guise of a crow. He plucked a blade of grass and charged it with a powerful mantra and hurled it at my tormentor. The burning grass which in fact had turned into a terrible weapon, followed the crow.

“The crow flew for its life at lightning speed. But no God would dare to give shelter to it. In despair it returned to Rama and took refuge at his feet. Rama pardoned it. But the power he had sent could not be completely neutralised. It destroyed one of the eyes of the crow.”

Hanuman was delighted to be entrusted with the story. Assuring Sita once again that Rama will be there soon, he took leave of her.

But he stopped at the gate of the garden. “Why not I gather some knowledge of the power of the demons? That will be helpful for planning our attack on the fort,” he thought.

And no sooner had the idea struck him than he uprooted the pillars of the gate and threw them at some tall trees, smashing them.

The crashing sound surprised several demons. They came running into the garden only to see trees going up like feathers or falling like grass cut by someone's scythe.

Was it some kind of silent whirlwind that caused this? But they were not required to feel surprised over the cause of the turmoil in the garden. What awaited him was a greater surprise—Hanuman himself—who had again assumed a huge form.

Some of the demons, even though nervous and panicky, tried to attack him. They were crushed in no time. Some wiser ones ran to Ravana and re-

ported to him of a strange creature creating havoc in the garden and the nearby areas of the fort.

Ravana grew furious. He despatched an army of demons to capture or kill the intruder.

Hanuman was then seated on a high wall, himself looking like a golden mountain. When he saw the demons rushing upon him, he uprooted a large chunk of the wall and threw it at them with such force that most of them were crushed to death.

Hanuman had now warmed up. His fierce shout and the flapping of his tail brought flying birds down to the ground. He jumped forward and approached the demons. They fell like street dogs before a charging elephant.

— To continue



WAR AND VENGEANCE

Years before the Mahabharata War, the Pandavas had been given a patch of wilderness to set up their capital. There was a forest on the site. Arjuna burnt down the forest to raise their castle there.

Takshaka, the great leader of the serpents, lived in the forest. He lost his family in the fire. For that he never excused Arjuna.

Then began the great Mahabharata War between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Karna, the celebrated hero,

fought for the Kauravas. He was pitted against Arjuna and he was determined to kill him.

Takshaka stealthily entered the battlefield and, assuming an invisible form, entwined around Karna's arrow. His plan was to bite Arjuna when the arrow would strike him.

Most of Karna's arrows were checked by Arjuna's arrows. But with the added strength of Takshaka, Karna's arrow became unusually powerful and deadly.



But it was Krishna who was Arjuna's charioteer. He knew the terrible nature of the arrow discharged by Karna. In time he made the horses of the chariot, kneel down. The serpent-ridden arrow narrowly missed Arjuna though it touched his helmet.

Takshaka was disappointed. He decided to take Karna into confidence so that Karna's action can be more effective.

At a brief interval in the battle Takshaka appeared before Karna and introduced himself. He told Karna how he should use his arrow. "My poison shall kill Arjuna instantly," said Takshaka happily.

Karna looked into the great serpent's eyes. "Thank you, my friend, but I will not take re-

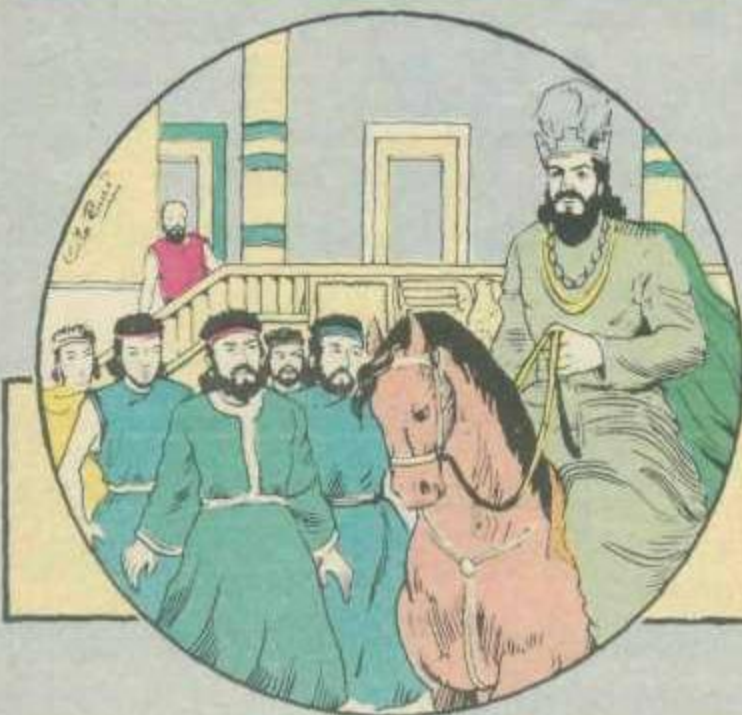
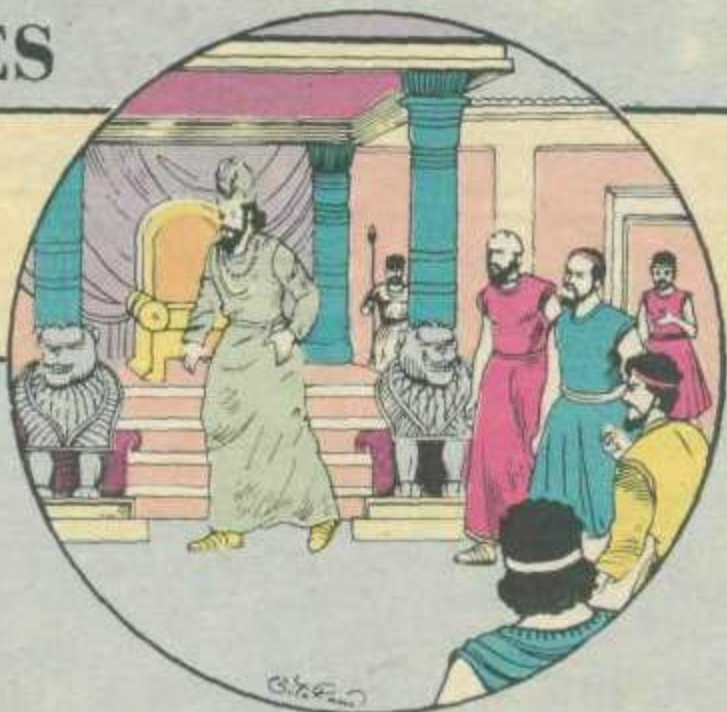
course to your help. My weapons are charged with powers which I have earned with my own efforts or through blessings of the great. Added to my weapons are my own courage and skill. The same with Arjuna. He is fighting with weapons that are charged with powers he has got in the same way. Your grievance against Arjuna has nothing to do with our conflict. You wish to wreak your vengeance on him through me. That is not proper. My using an arrow which will hide you will be a kind of treachery towards Arjuna."

Takshaka heard Karna's words in silence. He appreciated Karna's stand and praised him and went away.



MAN AND MIRACLES

Once a King invited a wise man to hear his discourse. But when the wise man arrived in the palace, the King had no time for him.



"I have just heard of a person who can fly in the sky and can live under water for days. I'm going to meet him," the King told the wise man while hopping on to the horse.

"My Lord, hundreds of inhabitants of my village can live under water for years and fly too. I will show if you come alone," said the wise man. The curious King at once accompanied the wise man.



"Here are fishes living in water and these are birds flying. Both are inferior to man," quietly observed the wise man.

A MONARCH IN THE WILDERNESS

Long long ago a young King named Jaypratap ascended the throne of the kingdom of Sarvari. He was extremely ambitious. Within the very first ten years of his reign he had conquered all the three kingdoms which were situated along the northern, southern and western borders of Sarvari.

On the eastern border of Sarvari there was no kingdom, but a great forest. Although King Jaypratap had already conquered wide territories, he was

not satisfied. Beyond the forest was situated the kingdom of Purvasha. He coveted that kingdom too and sent spies to study its condition.

The spies came and told the King that Purvasha had a strong King and a stronger army. It will not be easy to conquer that kingdom. But King Jaypratap did not give up his greed for Purvasha. He sent his spies again and again and through them learnt about the happenings there. Ten years passed.





Then he was informed that Purvasha was passing through bad times because of drought and famine. The soldiers were busy in relief works. The King was passing his time in conducting religious ceremonies to appease the gods.

"I have waited for ten years. At last the opportune time has come. Once I have conquered Purvasha, I will be hailed as the greatest monarch of my time," said King Jaypratap.

He led a large army towards Purvasha. But he had to cross the forest.

The army camped in the forest when it was evening. The

sky was overcast by clouds. There were signs of a storm. The King climbed a hill to see if there was any better place for his army to take shelter for the night.

But the storm broke out while the King was atop the hill. The forceful wind raised a cloud of dust from the riverbed on the other side of the hill. The King could not see a thing. He descended, but he could not reach his camp. He was driven by the terrible cyclone in another direction. He narrowly escaped the falling trees.

He wandered for long and got extremely tired. The storm subsided only when it was morning. He was awfully hungry. Luckily he saw a small hut. He went near it and found an old woman cooking a handful of rice.

"Old lady, please give me a little cooked rice. I will give you a gold coin," said the King, sure that the poor woman would feel delighted to receive such a high price for a mere part of her food.

"Sorry, what I have is just enough for myself," curtly said the old woman.

"I will give you my diamond

ring," said the King.

"Sorry, that is of no use to me. My food is of use to me," said the woman.

"I will give you my necklace studded with costly gems," said the King.

"Sorry, I don't want your necklace."

The King was dying of hunger. "You do not know who I am!" he said impatiently. "I am King Jaypratap. Give me food and save my life. I will give you my kingdom!"

"What if I do not agree to the bargain?" asked the old woman in a stern voice.

"Then I die!"

The old woman laughed. "My son! A little change of situation

and your mighty position as the monarch over not one but four kingdoms meant nothing! It cannot bring you succour. Of what benefit will it be to you when there is a greater change in your situation?" asked the old woman.

"What change do you mean?" the King asked in a feeble voice.

"I mean the change in situation which death will bring—sooner or later."

The King sat speechless. The old woman gave him food. Her boiled rice and salt tasted like nectar to the King. He bowed to her and found his way to his army. Instead of proceeding towards Purvasha, he returned to Sarvari and never wished for any more conquest.



THE GREAT PUMPKIN

Once upon a time there lived two neighbours in a village one of whom was very poor and the other very rich.

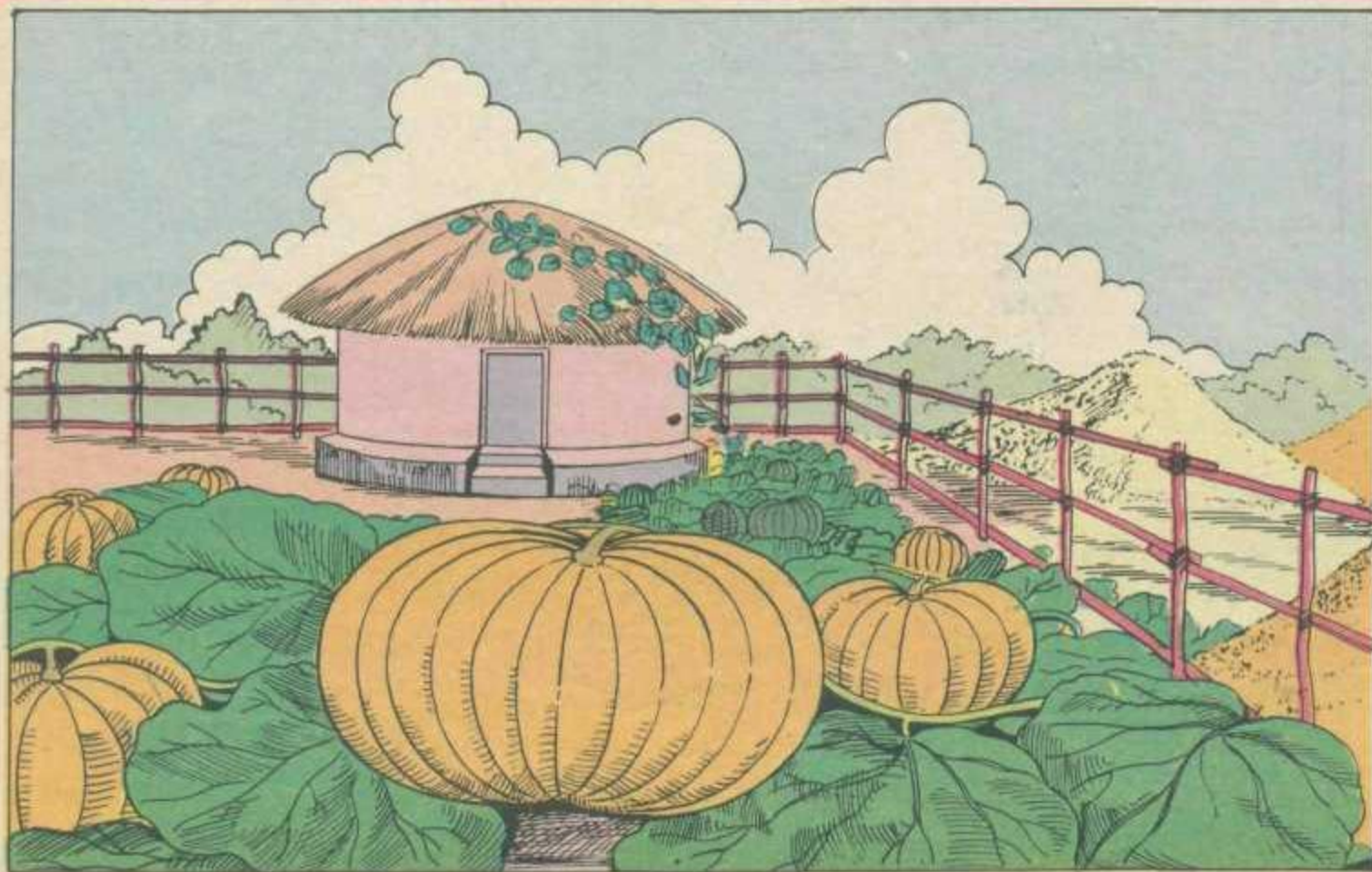
Lokenath the other poor man had a small plot of land. He used to get a meagre crop from his field with which he managed his family—needless to say—with much difficulty. But the other man, Harinath was a prosperous merchant. He had got a licence from the King to trade in rice, cereal and several such items. He had earned a lot of wealth, but he wished to have

more—even more!

Harinath lived in a mansion. Behind it was his big garden.

Beside Harinath's mansion stood the humble cottage of Lokenath, the farmer. One day, early in the morning, while Lokenath was going to his field, he noticed a small pumpkin plant sprouting near the manure heap of Harinath's field. Many unwanted plants sprouted on their own on that heap and got uprooted too. No one took notice of them.

Lokenath observed that plant



and mused over it for a moment. Then he went closer to it and cautiously carried it to his own field and planted it. Right from that day he went on watering the pumpkin plant and applied the necessary manure to it.

The plant flourished extremely well and unfolded its big leaves to the sun. The farmer made a bamboo frame for the creeper to crawl and rest on it. But as the plant grew, the frame could no more support it. Then the farmer prepared a bigger and stronger frame. He was surprised that an ordinary pumpkin plant could become so big. He had never seen such big leaves in his life.

In no time there bloomed flowers in the plant and then the fruit. But now Lokenath was much worried and unhappy because all the fruit soon withered in their tiny stage. However, one fruit survived and it grew bigger and bigger. Soon it became so big that a whole cart was not spacious enough to carry it.

Thought, the farmer, "What am I to do with such a big pumpkin? Who would buy this unique fruit? Suddenly he thought, why not present it to



the King?

When he reached the palace, all the King's officers and courtiers were surprised to see such a big pumpkin. The King was no less astonished. But, more than that, he was pleased. He rewarded Lokenath with a bagful of gold for having yielded such a big pumpkin in his field. "Where did you get the seed for your pumpkin creeper?" asked the King.

"My Lord, I found this creeper growing on the manure heap for Harinath's garden. I plucked it, knowing well that it shall be destroyed when they remove the manure and brought it to my field and nursed it," said Loke-

nath truthfully.

The next day, Harinath came to the royal court, knelt down and submitted, "My Lord, the reward that Lokenath got should have been given to me, because I had sown the seed on my manure heap and daily watered it for it to germinate and grow. Lokenath should be punished, because he stole away my plant."

"Well, Harinath, where did you get the seed of this wonderful pumpkin?" asked the King, concealing his feeling.

Harinath replied, "Oh mighty King, when I went to a neighbouring country for trade, I bought the seed from an expert farmer. He had advised me to plant it on a manure heap. I did according to his advice. But Lokenath stole it when it was very young."

Proclaimed the King:

"Henceforth Harinath will not be required to carry on his business. His licence for the same may be cancelled. He will be allowed only to grow pumpkins in his field. We give him one year. If he is not able to produce plenty of pumpkins of this size, he will be punished for hiding the secret of his great success in agriculture."

Harinath never expected such a turn of events. He stood speechless then he fell at the feet of the King and cried out, "My Lord, I spoke a lie. Please forgive me. I will never do anything like this once again in my life."

The King pardoned Harinath, but no longer did he enjoy the royal favour. Lokenath soon became as rich as his neighbour. That destroyed Harinath's peace of mind.

— Dash Benhur.



KSHEMA

Kshema, the young queen of the kingdom of Sagal, was extremely beautiful. She knew that she was so—and was quite proud of it.

Her husband became a disciple of the Buddha. He wanted that his wife should meet the Buddha. But the queen avoided meeting him. Not that she had no respect for the great sage, but she feared that he may not pay proper attention to her. She had heard that the Buddha did not give any value to physical beauty.

One day she heard the court-poet singing the glory of Spring at Venuvan, a royal garden a little away from the capital. She desired to see the garden for herself and went there.

She did not know that the Buddha was camping there at that time. She was amazed to see him relaxing under a tree—and was more amazed to see a young lady much more beautiful than her fanning the Buddha.

As Kshema looked on, the lady's appearance began changing very fast; she grew old and looked sick and all her charm disappeared.

The Buddha's attendant woman was a nymph. Through her the Buddha showed to Kshema, the momentary nature of physical beauty. Kshema realised how vain it was to be proud of such things. She bowed to the Buddha and became his disciple.





TWO FRIENDS AND A STRANGER

Many years ago there were two friends living for their studies in the Ashram of a guru. One was Hari and the other was Prakash.

After completing their studies they returned to their native places. Hari was back at Amaravati and Prakash settled down at Vishnupur. While Hari did business, Prakash was in the service of the King of Vishnupur.

From time to time they sent messengers to each other with letters and gifts. Ten years passed and Hari decided to pay a visit to his friend. Great was the joy of Prakash on meeting his dear friend, Hari.

"You must be here at least for a week," said Prakash.

"Well, my friend, if not for a week, I will stay with you at least for three days," said Hari.

When Prakash was away, Hari spent his time in a room upstairs reading books.

Three days passed. Prakash was happy to see that Hari was not in a hurry to go back to Amaravati. Even after a week Hari did not show any sign of leaving his friend's house.

Now, Prakash grew more surprised than happy. It is because Hari was looking more and more remorseful. One evening Prakash took his friend for a walk along the river-side and asked him, "Dear Hari, what is the matter with you? You were always a jolly chap. Even after your arrival here you were so happy. But for the last few days you are looking gloomy. What is it that ails you?"

At first Hari was reluctant to speak. But, by and by he came out with the anguish in his

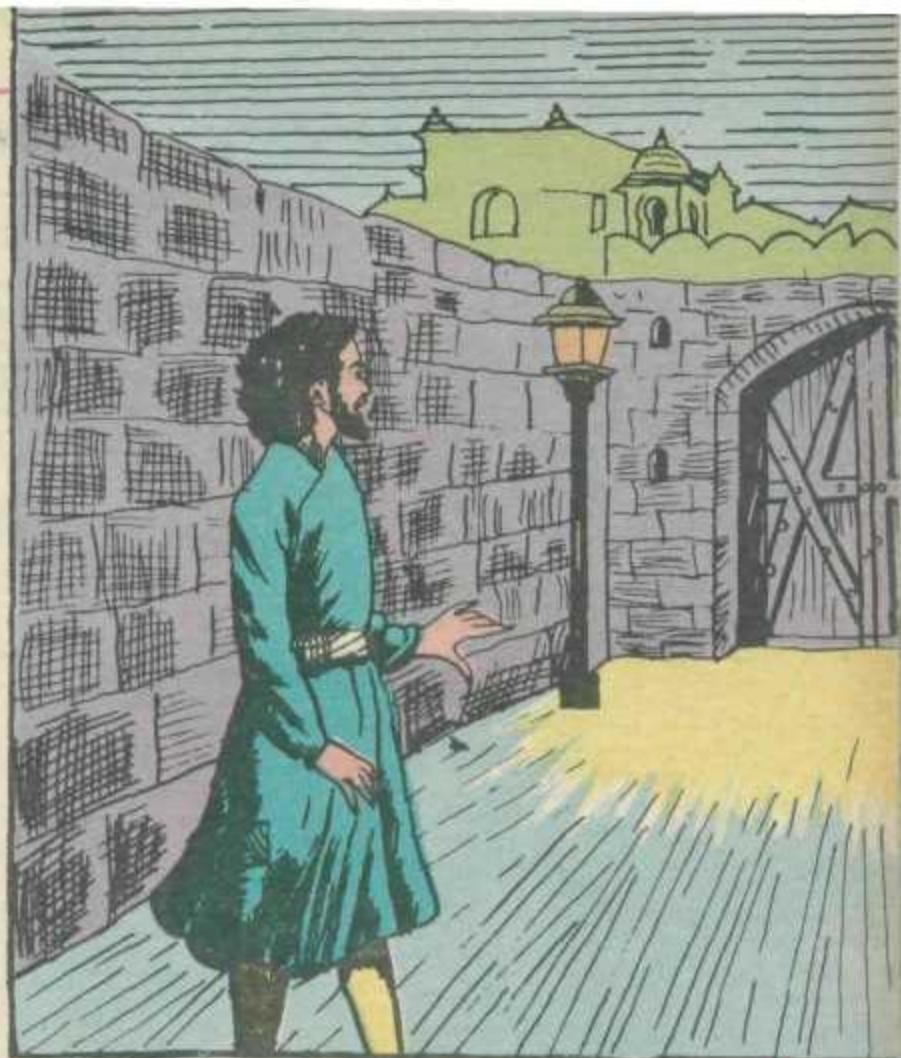
heart. In the house beside Prakash's lived a beautiful girl. When Prakash was away, Hari saw her through his window. She practised music in her room, unmindful of the fact that someone observed her.

"My friend, how much I wish that I could marry her! But, I am sure, that is not going to be possible. I know nothing about the girl and her parents as they know nothing about me!" said Hari as he heaved a sigh of anguish.

Prakash heard him with great attention, but kept quiet. They did not talk much for the rest of the day! Next day Hari saw his host, Prakash, visiting the neighbour's house. He came back after a long time and hugged Hari and told him that he had persuaded the girl's parents to marry her off to Hari. Hari's joy knew no bounds. The marriage was performed, Prakash playing the leading role from the bridegroom's side.

Hari returned to Amaravati with his wife and safe escorts provided by his wife's parents as well as Prakash.

Time rolled by. Five years later Prakash fell into bad days. His enemies poisoned the



King's ears against him. He was dismissed from service.

Prakash decided to join his friend Hari and set up some trade between Amaravati and Vishnupur. He proceeded to Amaravati.

It was night when he reached Amaravati. He did not know where Hari's house was situated. He decided to pass the night under a deserted thatch. At midnight he woke up by some noise. There were no houses near by, but only bushes and a big building in ruins. In the dim moonlight he saw a person catching hold of another. The second man suddenly whip-





ped out a dagger. But, before he could apply it on his adversary, the first man gave him a forceful push. The man fell down on a broken pillar and gave out a loud cry. Two patrolling guards of the city heard the cry and came running to the man. They examined him and one of them said to the other, "The fellow is dead. Let us look for his murderer." The two saw Prakash under the thatch and rushed upon him and took hold of him. "So, we have caught you red-handed!" the guards shouted joyously. They did not pay any attention to Hari's pleadings.

The guards detained Prakash

for the night in their headquarters. In the morning they led him to the house of the city judge.

They happened to pass by Hari's house. Hari who stood on the terrace of his building looking at the sunrise, grew curious to see a stranger being dragged by the guards. With a closer look he recognised the captive. He climbed down hurriedly and stopped the guards and asked them what the matter was.

"This stranger killed a man near the ruined castle. Hence we are leading him to the judge. With his permission we will hang him!" said the guards. "There is no time to lose. As you know, the practice is to hang a murderer in the morning!" they added.

Hari decided his course of action quickly. There is no time to lose, is it? Well, the murder you speak of was committed by me. I fled the scene, while this man was caught by you. I will not like an innocent man to die for my crime, come on, lead me to the judge," said Hari very forcefully.

The guards were puzzled. they led both the friends to the judge. The judge was no less

puzzled. He said gravely, "One of the two arrested men must be the murderer while the other one is mad. Since we do not know who is the criminal and who is mad, the best thing will be to put both of them to death!"

News spread in the city about this strange case. The people of the city loved Hari. Hundreds gathered at the execution ground and many of them shouted that something was wrong with the guards and the judge. One person leaped out from the crowd and said at the top of his voice, "What kind of justice is this? If the guards were not capable of arresting the real murderer, they have no business to kill two innocent men!"

The judge who was present on the spot asked, "But who is the real murderer?"

"I am the murderer. The fellow who was murdered entered my house and snatched my daughter's jewellery at the point of dagger. When he was about to escape, I knew what the matter was and chased him. He threw away the jewellery and was running away. I made an effort to catch him in order to hand him over to the guards. He



brought out his dagger and tried to stab me. I gave him a push. He fell down and cracked his skull and died!" said the man.

There was so much sincerity in his claim that the judge could not dismiss it. He asked Hari, "Gentleman, why did you want to pass as the murderer?"

"Sir, this man whom your guards had caught is a dear friend of mine. Once I desired to marry a girl, not knowing that the girl's marriage had already been fixed with my friend. My friend did not disclose that to me. Instead, he went to the girl's parents and persuaded them to marry their daughter to

me. I came to know of this afterwards. Deep was my sense of gratefulness for this friend. Since the guards said that he will be put to death immediately, I knew that there was no time to lose. I stepped forward to take his place," explained Hari.

"Why did you not plead innocence?" the judge asked Prakash.

"I wanted to plead innocence before you. But, when I saw my friend is claiming to be the murderer and I understood that he will be put to death, I did not plead innocence. I did not want him to die for my sake," explained Prakash.

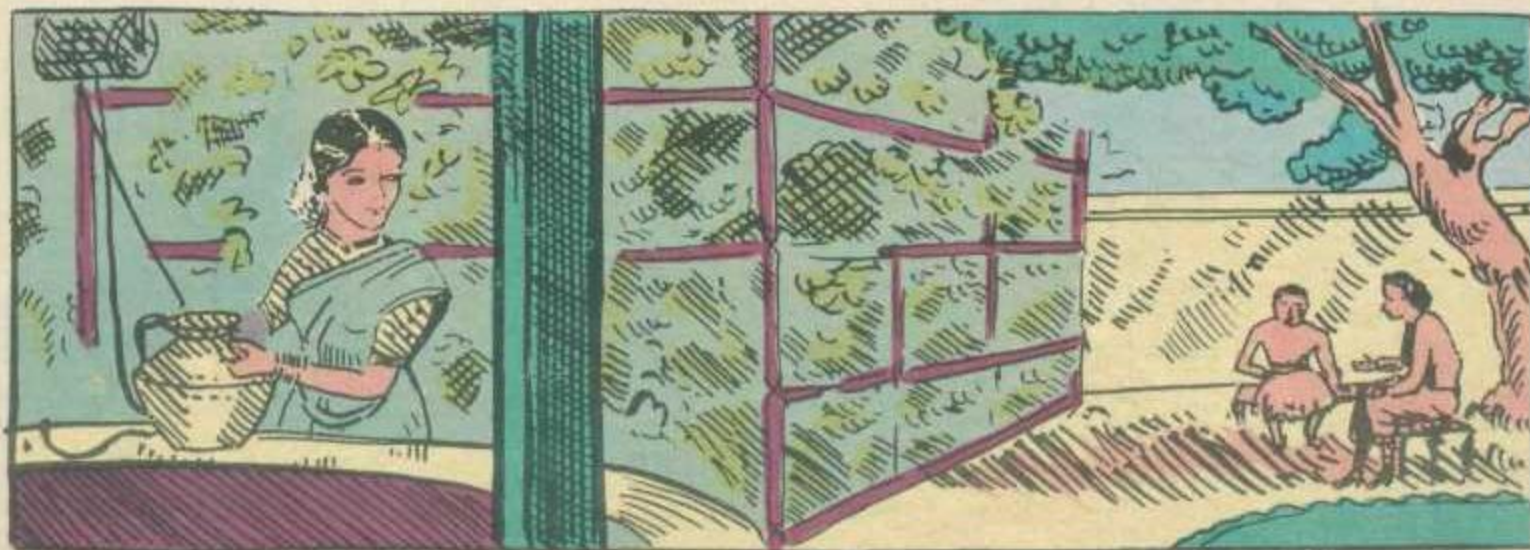
"What made you confess to the crime?" the judge asked the third man.

"I am not a murderer, though my action proved fatal to the bandit. Had I not given him that

push, he would have stabbed me. I heard the guards declaring the bandit dead. I kept quiet and returned home just to avoid harassment. But how can I keep quiet when I see two innocent men are going to die?" answered the third person.

Meanwhile so many people and other guards had identified the man who had got killed. Indeed, he was a notorious bandit.

The judge congratulated the three persons and he and the guards apologised to them. Prakash remained with his friend for some days and both of them set up a new business. They prospered very well and in due course the King of Vishnupur also realised his mistake and made Prakash his courtier.



THE GREATEST DOUBT

One summer evening the King was having his usual stroll on the roof of his palace. He could see much of his wide capital. As he walked to one end of the terrace his eyes fell on a crowded street. It was the street on which a temple stood. He saw his subjects going into the temple carrying offerings and coming out of it with prasad in their hands.

The King stood for a long time staring at the throngs of

devotees.

A couple of hours later the King was taking supper when he suddenly asked, "My Queen, who do you think is more important to my subjects? I or God?"

The Queen was taken aback. "Why this strange question at this hour, My Lord?" she asked with a smile.

"My court is crowded in the morning. In the evening the temple is crowded. What does





that mean? Whom do the people want more? Who is more important for them?" wondered the King aloud.

The Queen thought for a while. "Out of the two eyes you have which do you think is more important?" she asked in a lighter manner.

The King laughed. "A very convenient question to avoid answering my question!" he said and continued to take his food.

But the next day he told his ministers and courtiers, "My heart is burdened with a serious doubt. I'll get no sleep until someone clears it. My doubt is this: Who is more important to

my subjects—God or I?"

The members of the court looked at one another. They knew for certain that it was no easy question to answer. They kept quiet.

Irritated, the King bawled, "Who sealed your mouths? Open them and speak out! God or I?"

"Your Majesty! Yours is the greatest of all doubts. Hence kindly give us a day's time to ponder over it."

"No," yelled the King. "Do you want me to spend yet another sleepless night? Whoever answers to my satisfaction will be amply rewarded. Since you say my doubt is the greatest of all doubts, I give you an hour's time. If you fail to clear my doubt after that I'll render all of you jobless."

The King retired into his rest-room

The ministers and the courtiers racked their brains as they discussed the situation among themselves. "If we say that the King is more important than God, we will be liars and sinners," said one.

"By saying that God is more important, we will only incur

the wrath of the King. And everyone knows the consequences," said another.

"But is it possible to serve two masters?" asked a third voice. "There is no way out. A horrible ordeal awaits us."

The oldest courtier stood up. He looked calm and confident. "Pray to God to bless us with wisdom. I have hit upon the right answer. I believe I can be fair to both God and the King. Relax till the King is back."

The King returned after an hour. "God or I?" he asked in a grave tone. "Come out with your answer immediately."

"Your Majesty, who can be more important to us than you?" answered the wise old man.

The King's face looked bright, not because he felt flat-

tered, but because he could challenge the old man to prove his point. "Are you sure? How do you say so?"

"Certainly you are more important than God," replied the wise old man. "You can banish me or anybody from your kingdom. But can God even do that? He cannot!"

There was silence. The King looked rather puzzled for a moment as he reflected on the question. Then he burst out laughing.

"Indeed, you're right. God cannot banish anyone from his kingdom for the whole universe is His Kingdom!" he said, clapping his hands.

Needless to say, the old courtier went home with his pocket heavy with a purse of gold coins.

Retold by P. RAJA





Toothsome

THE BARRACUDA IS ONE OF THE MOST SAVAGE KILLERS OF THE SEA, YET IT ALLOWS THE TINY WRASSE TO **ENTER ITS MOUTH** AND FEED OFF THE BACTERIA BETWEEN ITS TEETH.

THE BARBED TONGUE OF A WOODPECKER IS COILED UP INSIDE ITS HEAD AND IS SUPPORTED BY SPECIAL BONES AND ELASTIC TISSUE WHICH ENABLE IT TO SHOOT IT OUT WITH GREAT FORCE. IN THIS WAY INSECTS ARE IMPALED.

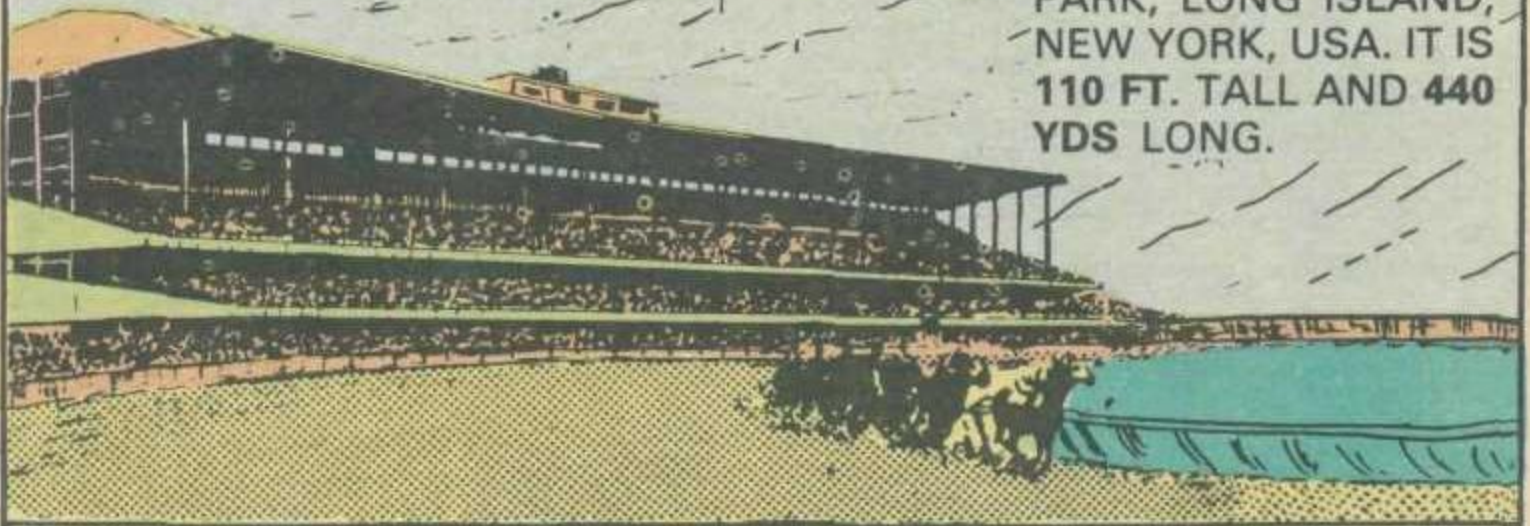


A crab that is not a crab!



THE KING OR HORSESHOE CRAB IS **NOT** A CRAB AT ALL. IT IS RELATED TO THE SCORPION AND IS KNOWN TO HAVE DEVELOPED ABOUT **370 MILLION** YEARS AGO.

THE LARGEST GRANDSTAND IS AT BELMONT PARK, LONG ISLAND, NEW YORK, USA. IT IS 110 FT. TALL AND 440 YDS LONG.



THE FIRST WEIGHT-LIFTER TO JERK A QUARTER OF A TON WAS RUSSIAN VASILI ALEXEEV IN 1976.



A QUARTER OF A TON

256 WINS

ITALIAN MV-AGUSTA MOTORCYCLES WON 256 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RACES BETWEEN 1952 AND 1972.



CATCHING THE CULPRIT

Long ago Kashmir was ruled by a just King named Yasaskara. He enacted sound laws and saw to it that the laws worked well.

Years of effort brought peace and happiness to the kingdom.

One day the King received a report that a citizen was fasting at a public square. The King summoned him and asked him what his grievance was.

"My Lord, I was a merchant. But I fell into bad days. Desiring to pay up my loans, I sold my house to a money-

lender. I shifted my wife to my garden-house and went abroad in search of fortune.

"On my return I found my wife driven to the verge of death. The money-lender had thrown her out of the garden-house, saying that I had sold my garden-house to him along with my main house. Deprived of the garden-house and the garden around it, my wife took refuge in a beggar's hut and lived on begging!"

The King summoned the



GitaRani

money-lender and demanded an explanation from him. But he said that the garden-house was a part of the property he had purchased. He showed the document which clearly stated this.

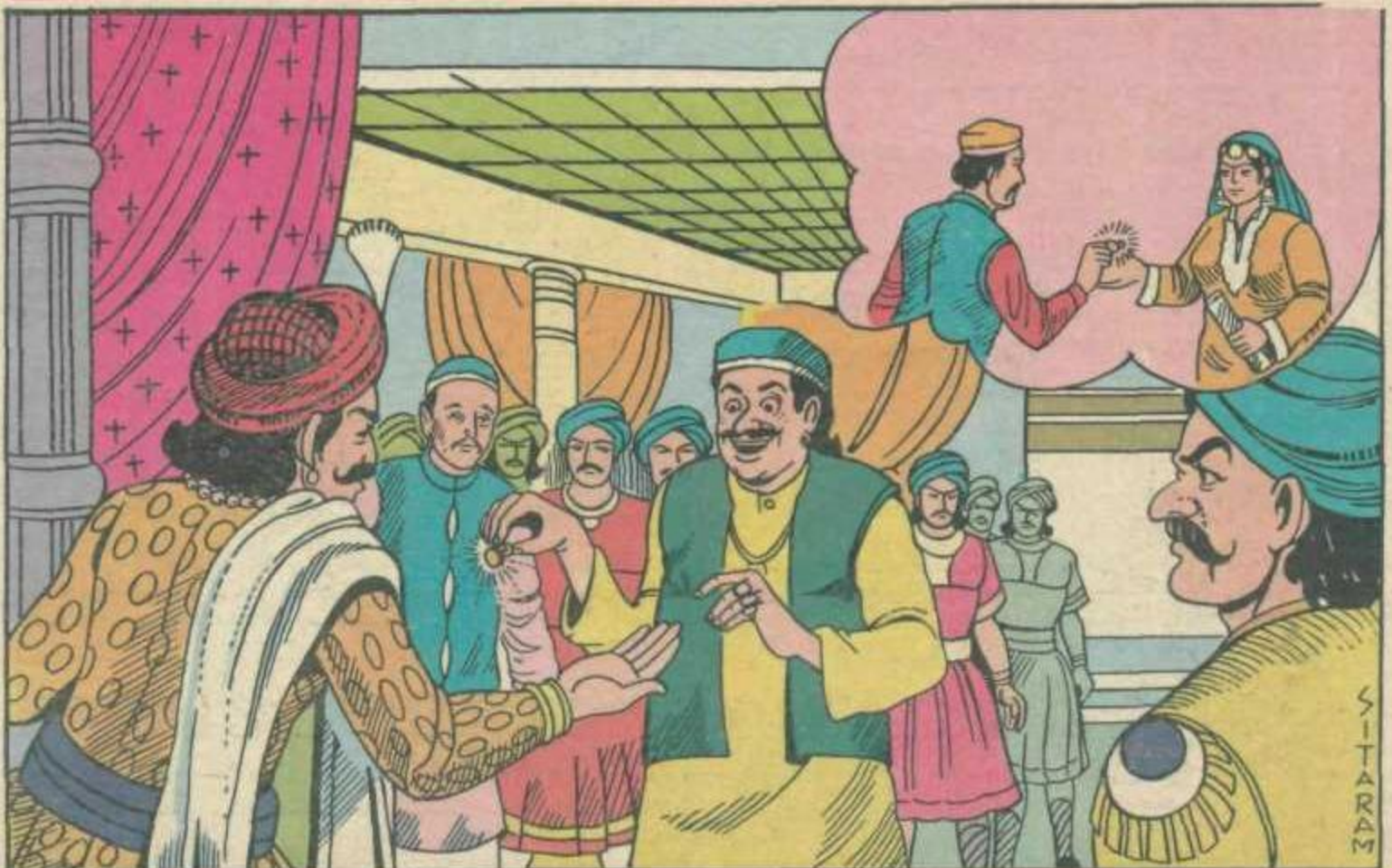
"My Lord, the sentence about the garden-house has been added afterwards," said the merchant.

"How do you prove it?" asked the King.

"My Lord, the man who drew the document has also signed it as the witness to the deed. He knows everything. Kindly ask him," replied the merchant.

The witness was summoned. Without the slightest hesitation he said that the merchant had sold his garden-house to the money-lender along with his main house.

However, the King suspected that the witness was too ready to say what he said. The King talked with the money-lender and the witness and others for sometime. Suddenly he looked at the money-lender's ring and showed some curiosity about it. The money-lender took it out and gave it to the King. "I will show it to the queen," said the King and he went inside his palace.



He returned after an hour, an account book in hand. What he had done was this: he sent a messenger with the ring to the money-lender's wife. The messenger told the woman, "Look at this ring. This is your husband's. I brought this so that you will know that I come from your husband. Now, he urgently needs his old account book."

The woman handed over the account book to the messenger. The King went through it hurriedly and saw that on a certain date the money-lender had paid a heavy sum of money to the witness—a hundred times more than what he should have received for drawing the

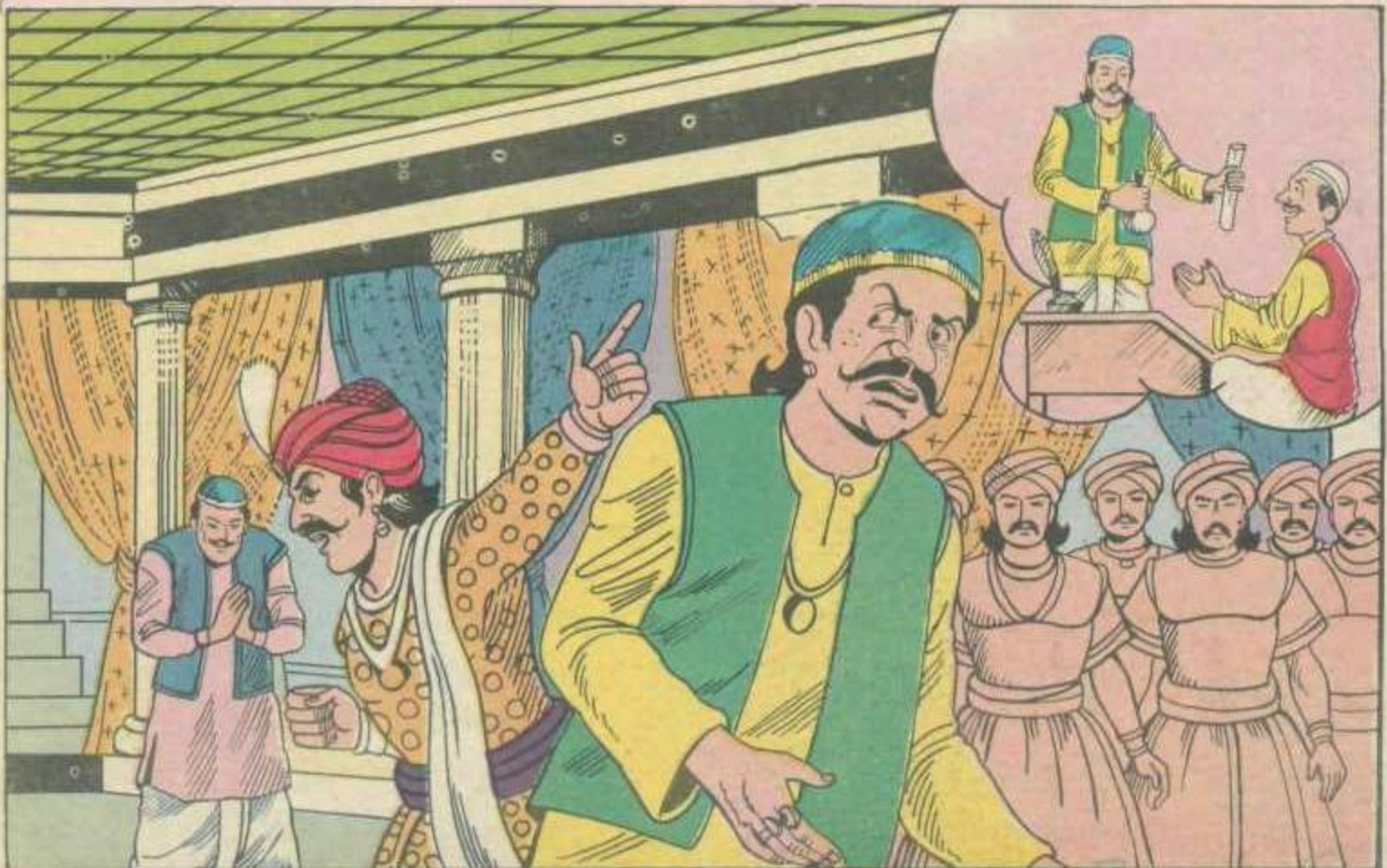
document and putting his signature to it as a witness.

"Why did you pay this amount to the witness?" the King suddenly asked the money-lender.

The money-lender was not prepared to face the question. He fumbled and said that he had earlier borrowed some money from the witness.

All laughed to hear about the rich money-lender borrowing money from a poor witness!

The money-lender confessed to his guilt. The King drove him out of his kingdom and restored to the merchant not only his garden-house but also his main house.



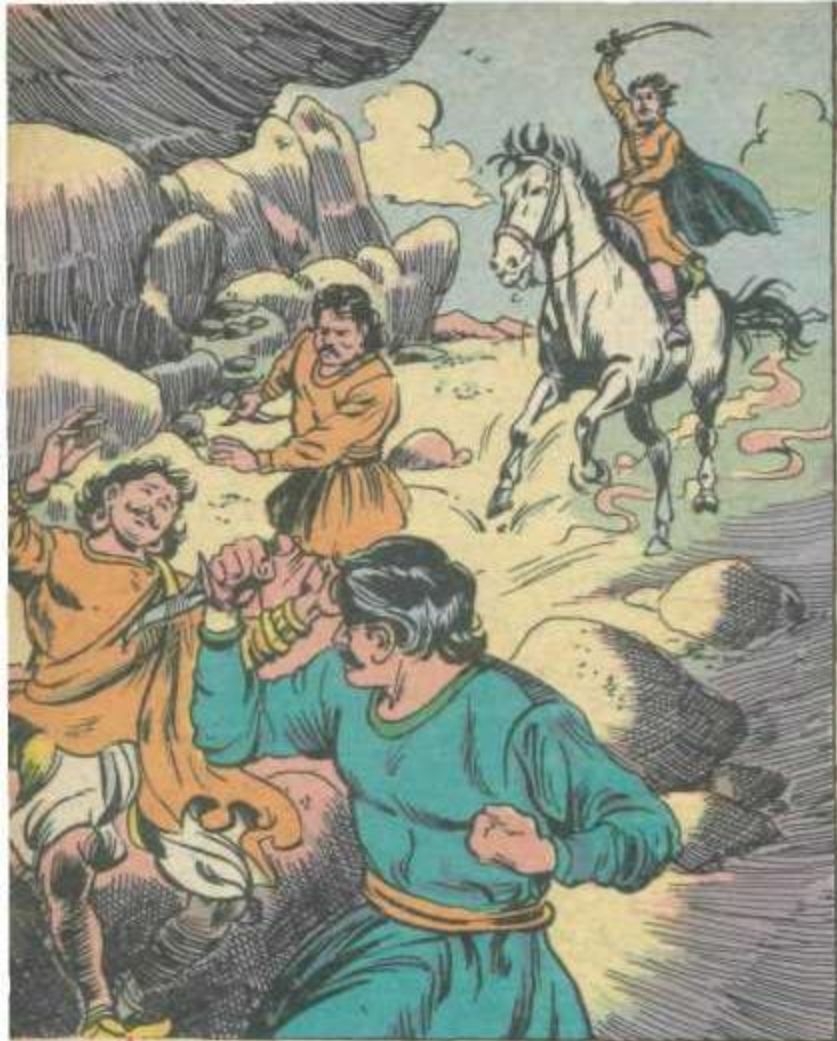
New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire

THE STRANGE CONDUCT OF A KING

Dark was the night and fearful the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Gusts of wind made the trees hiss to one another. At intervals of thunderclaps could be heard the moaning of jackals and the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed weird faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. But as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the Vampire that possessed it observed, "O King, you seem to be quite steady in your endeavour. But the princes as a class are rather unpredictable. There are instances of their giving up opportunities which they themselves crave to have. Let me cite an example to you. Pay attention to my narration. That may bring you some relief."





The Vampire went on: Rangpur and Bhairavpet were two small kingdoms situated amidst a range of hills and forests.

The two kingdoms often quarrelled and fought. The young Prince, Rohit Gupta, ascended the throne of Rangpur. He was anxious to destroy the army of Bhairavpet once for all. But that was not easy. He did not know how to do it.

One day a mendicant told him, "In the forest along the frontier of your kingdom is situated the tomb of Chanda Sharma, who was once a dreaded tantrik. If you do some penance near his tomb all alone, you will

gain magic powers by which you can destroy your enemy."

The mendicant taught the King what rites he should perform near Chanda Sharma's tomb.

The young King set out for the forest dressed as an ordinary man, but armed. On the way he met a hermit and asked him the way to the tomb. The hermit told him the way but warned him against seeking any power from the tomb. "Such powers may benefit you in one way, but at the same time may harm you in another way," he said. The King thanked him, but continued in his journey: Brave and intelligent that he was, he did not find any difficulty in locating the tantrik's tomb. From some distance he saw that it was situated at the foot of a hill. A number of skulls hung over it:

But as he approached the spot, he heard a piercing cry. He saw that two strong men had stabbed a third man.

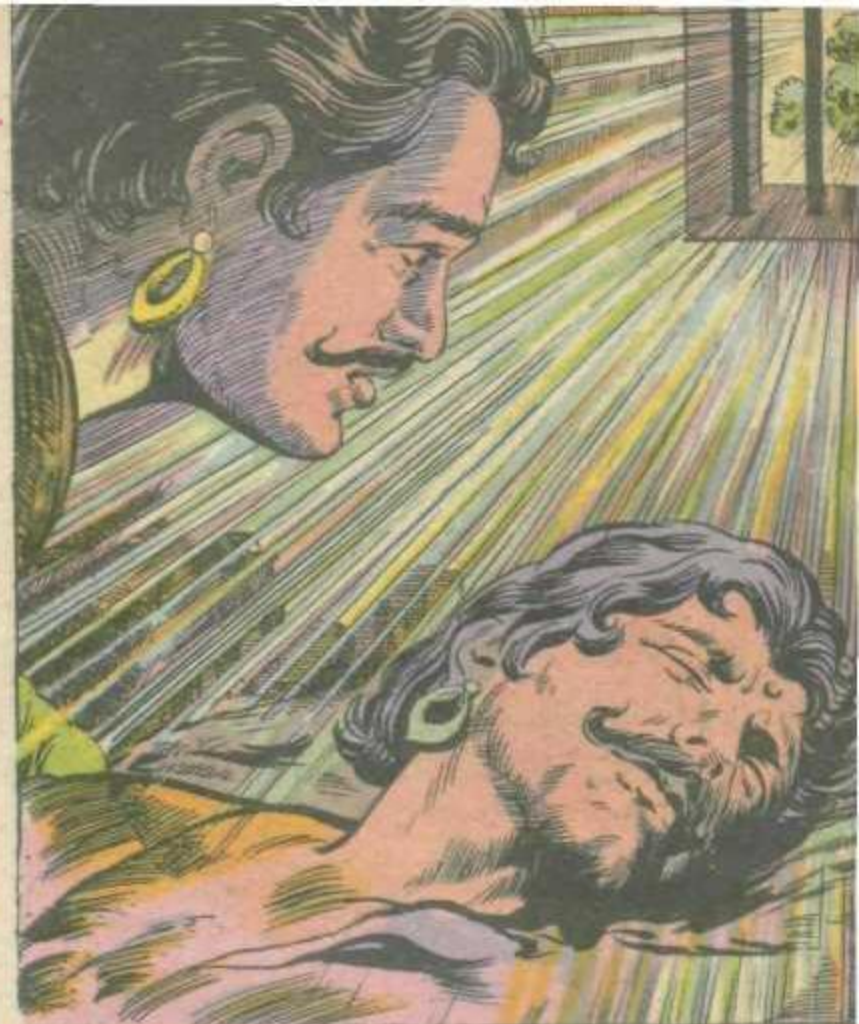
"Stop or I will kill you!" shouted the King unsheathing his sword. The ruffians grew nervous and they took to their heels. The King rushed to the side of their victim who was profusely bleeding. The King

looked in all directions. Beside the tantrik's tomb there was a hut. Behind the hut was a small spring flowing from the hill.

The King lifted the man and carried him into the hut. He fetched water from the spring and poured it into his mouth.

The man opened his eyes and thanked the King. From his mutterings the King understood that the man had done the same kind of penance which he wanted to do. As a result, the man had obtained a ring made of human bone. One could get any three wishes fulfilled by the ring. The wishes, of course, has to be only destructive—harmful to somebody—like a person's death or an army's defeat. After granting three wishes, the ring was to become ineffective. If one got only two wishes fulfilled and then handed it over to another man, that man would be able to get another round of three wishes fulfilled.

The wounded man had got two of his wishes fulfilled. He had brought about the death of his enemy and had destroyed the cattle of his neighbour which entered his compound. The two ruffians, who earlier were his friends and who knew that the



magic ring will be at their service only if they could get it before he had got his third wish fulfilled, tried to snatch it from him. As he refused to part with it, they stabbed him to kill him.

"Tell me, does one enjoy the benefits of the ring without any sacrifice? Does it not prove harmful in some way?" asked the King.

"I do not know," feebly replied the wounded man who was on the verge of death.

"Why did you not use the ring for the third time and destroy the two ruffians when they attacked you?" asked the King.

The man could hardly talk.

However, from the expression on his face the King had the feeling that the idea to apply his magic power against his attackers had not struck him.

The man died thereafter. The King took the ring off the dead man's finger and put it on himself.

The King sat alert. Within an hour he saw the two ruffians stealthily coming towards the hut.

"Come on, young men, come on. I'm the master of the ring you covet!" gravely said the King.

The two young men stopped, not sure of their next course of

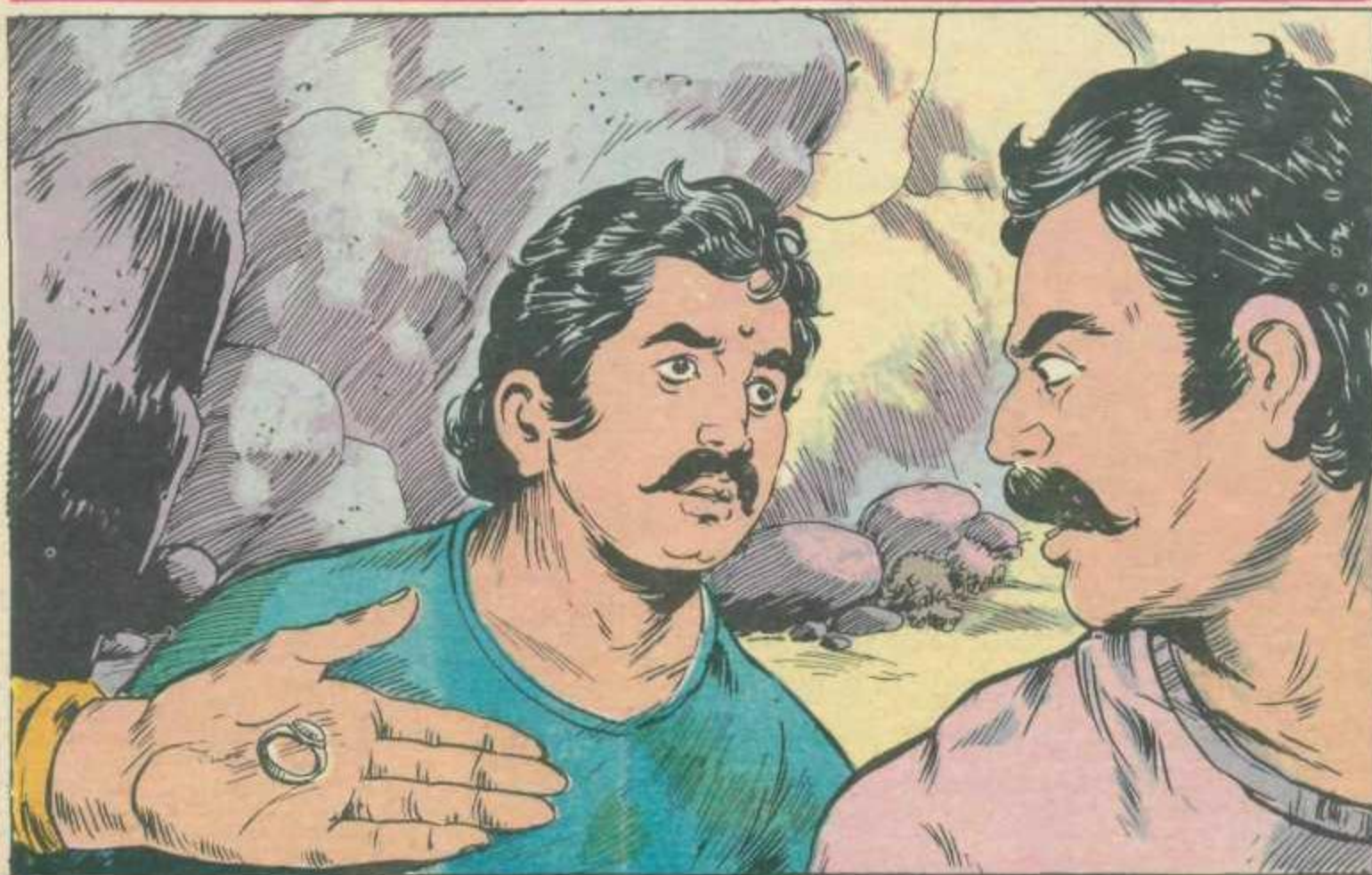
action.

"You killed your friend. The minimum you can do for him now is to bury him. Do so, or I'll destroy both of you using the power of the ring! And, listen to me. If you do as I say, I may consider giving the ring to you. I do not have any desire on it," the King said again.

The two murderers dug a pit and buried their victim's body. Then they stood, looking at the King.

"Who between you should have the ring?" asked the King.

The two looked at each other. One of them said, "You can pass it on to me."



At once said the other, "To me, if you please."

"Go and decide between yourselves who should have the ring and come back to me after an hour," said the King.

The two fellows went away. The King plucked some guavas from a nearby tree and ate them and drank from the spring and waited.

One of the two ruffians returned after an hour. "My friend has given up his claim to the ring. Kindly give it to me," he said.

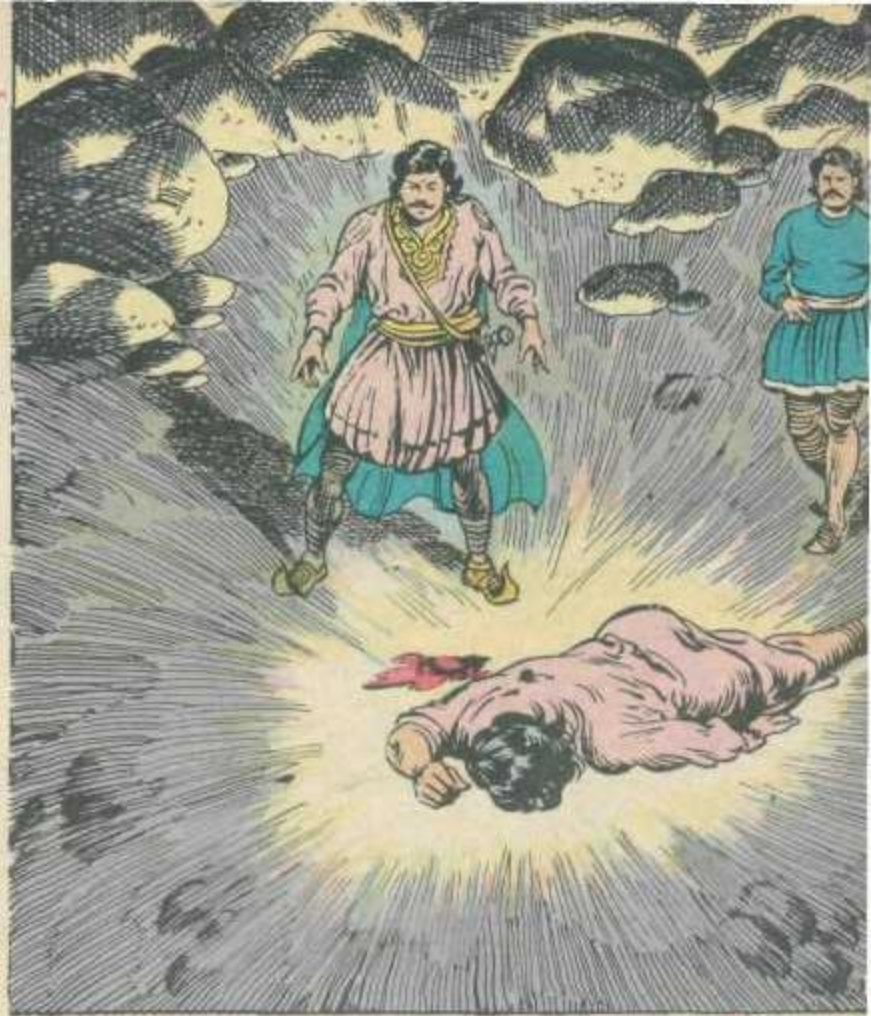
"Indeed, how can your friend have any claim to the ring when he is no more?" observed the King, laughing.

The man was taken aback. Suddenly the King unsheathed his sword once again and said, "Lead me to your friend, or I will cut off your head!"

The man sweated nervously and began taking forward steps. "Do as I say or you will be destroyed, either by my sword or by the power of the ring," said the King sternly.

The man led the King into a cave. The King saw the other ruffian lying dead there.

"Now, walk ahead of me," ordered the King. As soon as



both were out of the forest, the King handed over the man to some guards and asked them to throw him into gaol for trial for murder. He then made a fire and then crushed the magic ring and threw its powder into it.

He returned to his capital and told his ministers and general, "I was thinking of some secret means of combating our enemy. But I have changed my mind. We must strengthen our army and be prepared to face the enemy in the battlefield."

The Vampire paused for a moment and then demanded of King Vikram, "O King, I wonder if you can resolve some of

my doubts. King Rohit Gupta could have destroyed the two ruffians and returned safely without any loss of time, by the power of his magic ring. Instead of doing that, why did he pass time, involving the two in a quarrel? He went to the tantrik's tomb for gaining the power to destroy his enemy. But, even though he got the magic ring so easily, why did he not put its power to use? Answer me, O King, if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck."

King Vikram answered forthwith: "King Rohit Gupta was a wise man. In his early enthusiasm, he had decided to vanquish his enemy by the help of magic powers. But soon he realised that taking recourse to such powers was harmful to himself.

Why did the dying man fail to use the power of the ring for the third time when he needed it most? Obviously he had lost his presence of mind. That is the price he had paid for using the ring to get two of his wishes fulfilled. King Rohit decided never to use the power of the ring, though he took possession of it.

"Now it should be clear why he did not use it against the ruffians. He made them fight between themselves so that it will be easy for him to tackle one ruffian than two. Both the ruffians deserved death for having murdered a man. I need not say again why he destroyed the ring. It had no use for him."

No sooner had the King concluded his answer than the Vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.





THE KING'S SON-IN-LAW

In a certain village in Norway lived William, a poor young man. Poor he was, true, but he was very generous. He spent most of what he earned in charity.

"He behaves as though he was the King's son-in-law!" The villagers commented in joke.

William grew curious to know what a King's son-in-law was like. Besides, he had never seen the royal palace. One morning he set out for the capital.

On his way he met two wealthy young men who too were heading for the town. "Are you also visiting the town on hearing the King's herald?" they asked William. "What symbols are you carrying?" They laughed when they knew that William was ignorant of the herald. Looking at his tattered clothes,

they said, "Friend, better do not show yourself in the capital today, for today is a special day."

William did not understand what they meant. He did not bother either. On the roadside sat an old man. "Will any of you fetch me a little water?" he said imploringly.

"No time to waste on useless fellows," said the two. But William picked up a broken pot and fetched water for the old man.

"All my goodwill is with you, my son!" said the old man. "Never reject those who have served you faithfully. Never insult one who had been once at the top!"

William thanked the old man and walked on. Soon one of his shoes got torn. "These have been my faithful companions," he mused and took the pair of

shoes in his hand.

He had proceeded a furlong more when he stumbled against a buffalo-horn. "This had once been on the top of a buffalo," he said and picked it up.

He entered the capital and found it festive. Many young men, including the two he had met, were going towards the palace, each sporting two costly objects like golden swords, diamond rings, strange helmets and elegant spears.

Suddenly two royal officers greeted William and led him straight into the apartment of the princess.

"Why did you visit the town?" asked the princess.

"To find out what the King's

son-in-law is like!" replied William.

The princess blushed. Indeed, she had dreamt of this young man who would carry two symbols—a pair of old shoes and a buffalo-horn. Her dream had been announced, but the symbols by which the young man was to be recognised as her would-be husband was known only to a few trusted officers.

William was duly married to the princess. In course of time he was made the crown prince.

Once when he visited his village, the elderly people were heard telling one another: "Did I not say, even when he was a kid, that he behaved like the king's son-in-law?"

(Adopted)



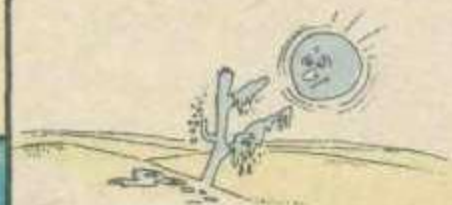


DID YOU KNOW?



Such was the memory power of Winston Churchill that he could repeat almost every word of a lecture he had heard or a full Shakespearean play.

For the first time in human knowledge snow fell on the desert of Sahara on 18 February 1979.



The first Duke of Wellington, famous as the Iron Duke and a great army general, had a small real tail at the lower end of his spine.

"Hurrah" comes from the Cossack exclamation "Hu Raj" which means heavens!



Posing as a sweeper during the reign of terror in French Revolution, Charles Bussiere saved 34,000 men and women from the jaws of guillotine. He did this by sweeping away papers carrying the names of people to be executed and then destroying them.

The flower of the Hawaiian tree known as Firecracker tree opens with a blast!





A PUNDIT'S DILEMMA

Sompur was not exactly a town a century ago, but it was a big village with a well-known temple, a landlord and several traders living there.

Once a celebrated scholar named Ravi Sharma visited the village at the invitation of the landlord, Raghu Rao. At Raghu Rao's request Ravi Sharma agreed to give a discourse to the villagers in the temple premises.

Thousands turned up to listen to him. Ravi Sharma was not only well-versed in Puranas and epics, but also he was a good speaker.

With many examples he explained to the people how it was sinful to help a person in committing a sin. He said, "When you know that one is going to steal from somebody's house and you hand over to him a knife which you know will be

used by him for stealing, you are bearing a part of his sin."

Giving the illustration of the life of King Harishchandra, Ravi Sharma said, "One must be truthful. Even one should not consider one's life to be more precious than one's commitment to truth!"

People listened to him with rapt attention and they applauded when his speech was over.

As the scholar was proceeding to the landlord's house, a young man sprang up before him and greeted him politely. "O Pundit, you have enlightened me. You have showed me the path to honest and truthful living. Thank you very much!"

The scholar turned to his host and said, "I am delighted to hear this young man promising to live honestly and truthfully.

Even if one man could change by the power of my talk, I should feel rewarded for my visit to your village."

The landlord kept quiet, though he smiled.

"Why, Raghu Rao, don't you think that the young man was sincere?"

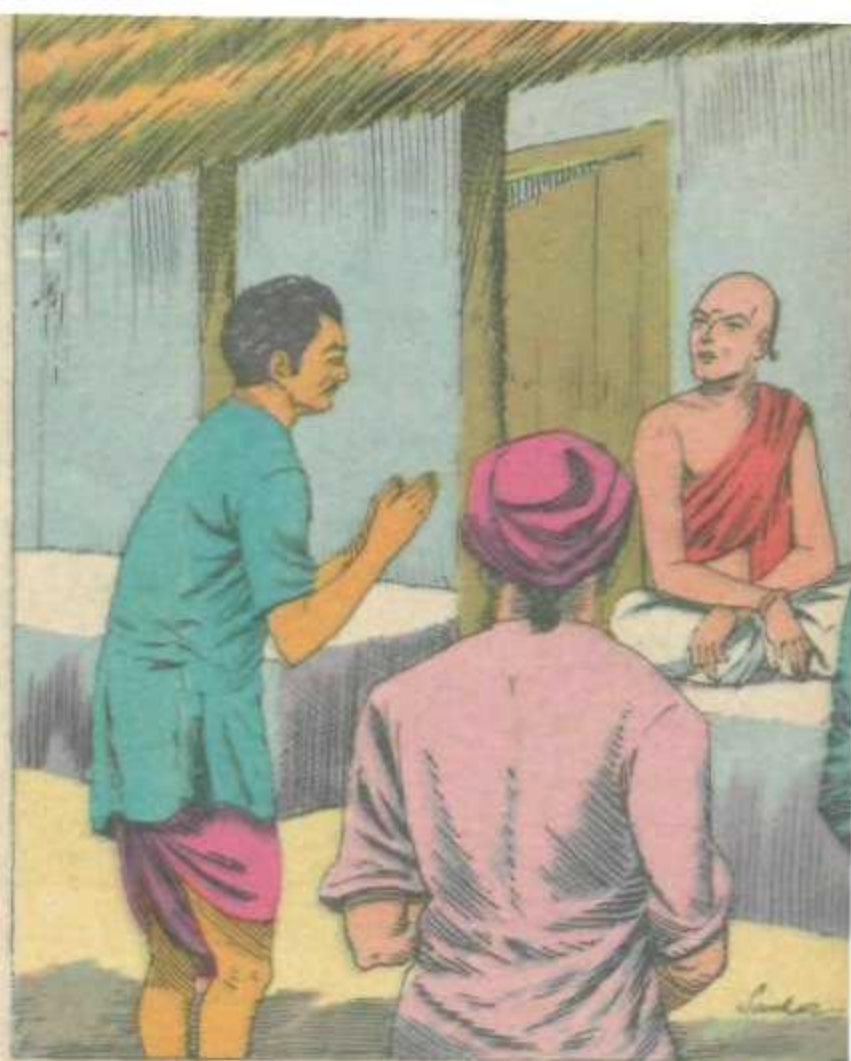
"Sharma-ji, he was sincere when he spoke to you. But it is not so easy to change. When one begins to follow an ideal, one faces many problems," said Raghu Rao.

"Well, if one faces problems, one can find solution to them in the scriptures!" replied Ravi Sharma.

"I doubt if scriptures can always come to our rescue. One must have commonsense and experience in life to solve the practical problems. Of course, it is true, that unless one has the basic wisdom, one will be beating in the bush," commented the landlord.

Sharma remained silent. Perhaps he did not agree with the idea that one cannot solve all the problems in the light of scriptures only.

The night passed smoothly. But early in the morning, as the scholar came out of the foreyard



of his host's house, the young man confronted him. He was looking agitated. "Pundit-ji, I am in a dilemma. Two fellows from a distant village met me on the crossroads last night. They asked me the way to the wine-shop. Now, if I tell them the way I would be sharing the sin of drinking. On the other hand I will be a liar if I had told them that I did not know the way to the wine-shop!" said the young man.

"So, what did you tell them?" asked the curious scholar.

"I led them to my house and locked them up in a room because I did not like to disturb you at that hour of the night.

They were howling for a long time, but I did not care. Now, tell me what do the scriptures say to solve my problem?" demanded the young man.

"My friend, you should have said that you did not know the way, to save them from their sin of drinking! You could have said this much and that would not have been harmful," affectionately said the scholar.

"Nonsense, is this what the scripture say? You are asking me to speak a lie!" shouted the young man. Some villagers on their way to their works collected in front of the landlord's house. The scholar was deeply embarrassed.

Suddenly came out the landlord. The young man greeted him. In a grave voice the landlord said, "You boy, go and tell them that you know the way to the wine-shop, but you will not

show the way! That will be honest as well as truthful on your part!"

The young man's face brightened up. He ran away. The villagers also dispersed.

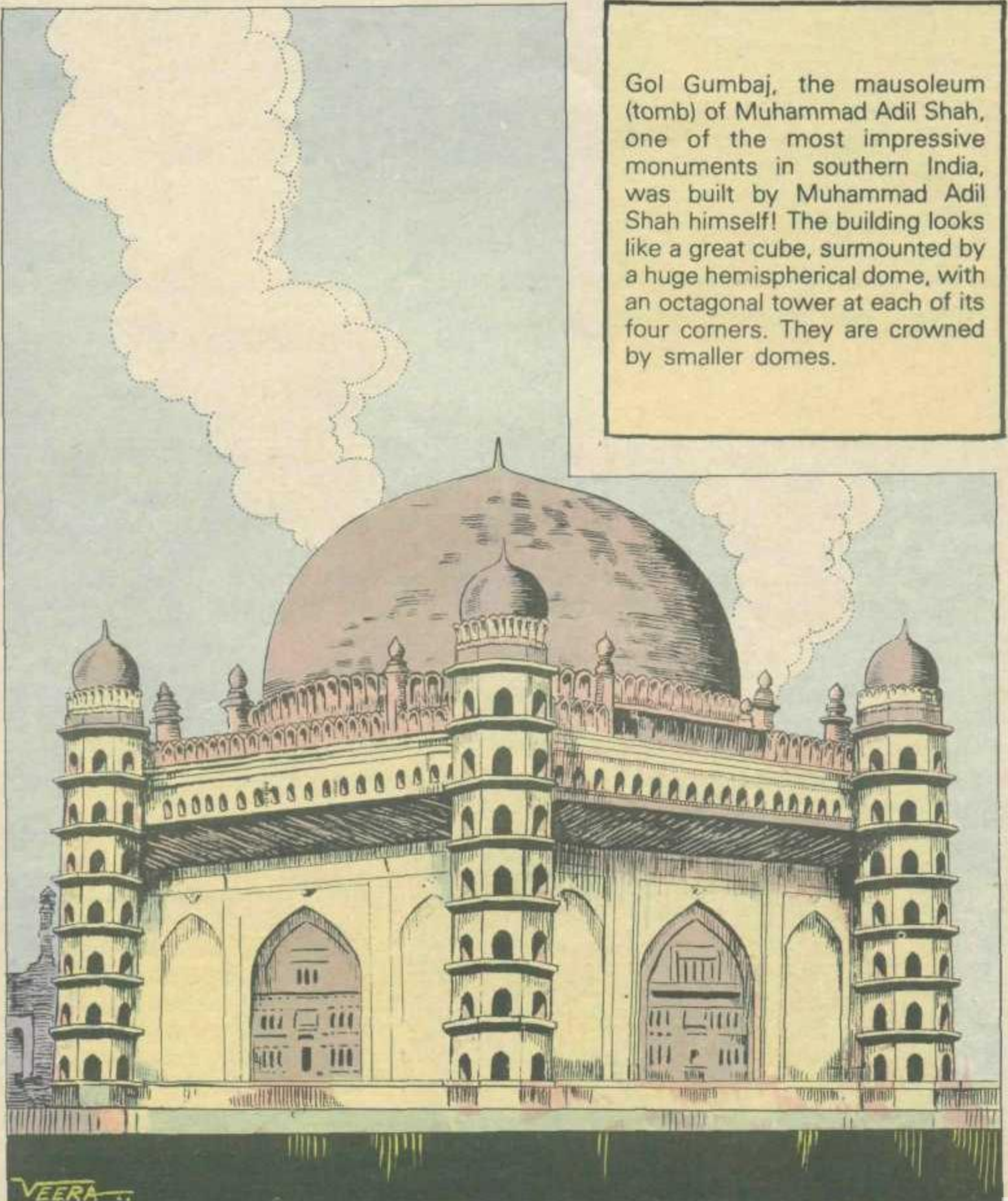
Said the scholar, "My friend, you were right. It is not my knowledge of theory but your knowledge of the nature of the young man and your practical sense which solved the problem."

The landlord laughed and said, "But now I wonder if everybody can benefit from your lecture in the same way. Look at this young man. He has locked up two strangers for a whole night. That is illegal, but at least he has stopped them from drinking! I did not wish him to know what a wrong thing he has done, for that would have thrown him into yet another dilemma!"



GOL GUMBAJ AND MONUMENTS OF BIJAPUR

Gol Gumbaj, the mausoleum (tomb) of Muhammad Adil Shah, one of the most impressive monuments in southern India, was built by Muhammad Adil Shah himself! The building looks like a great cube, surmounted by a huge hemispherical dome, with an octagonal tower at each of its four corners. They are crowned by smaller domes.





The Adil Shah dynasty of Bijapur was founded by Yusaf Adil Shah, the younger son of the Sultan of Turkey, Murad. According to custom, when Murad died, all his sons excepting the eldest were to be secretly killed.

Yusaf must die, so that in future there is no quarrel over the throne,—the ministers told Yusaf's mother. But she was too fond of the boy to let that happen. She sought the help of her confidants.



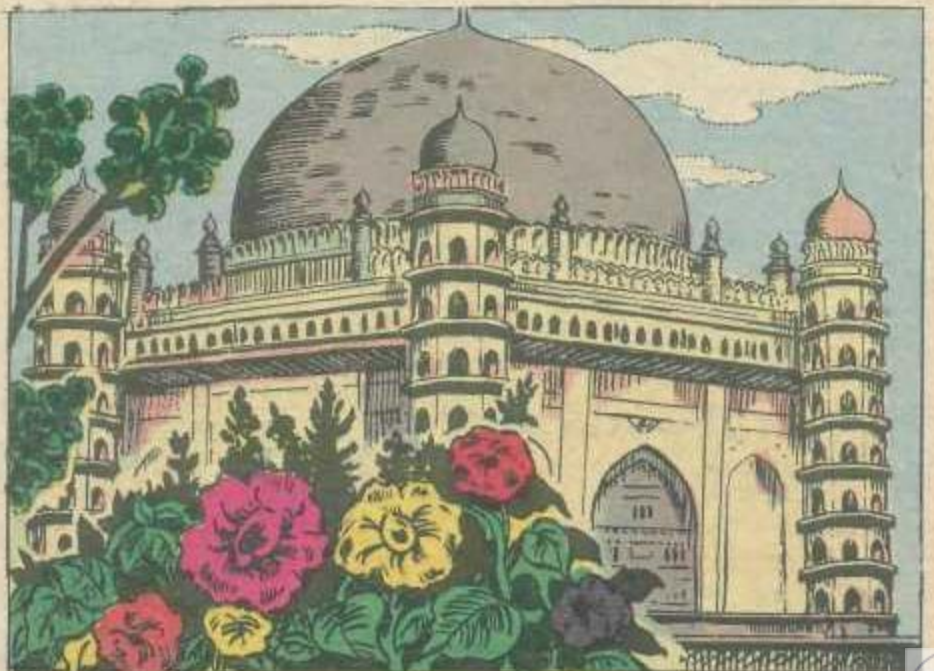
One of the queen's men met a merchant who was on his way to Hindusthan with merchandise. He had a slave boy who resembled Yusaf. The boy was bought in the evening and treated like a prince for a few hours. Assassins killed him at night.

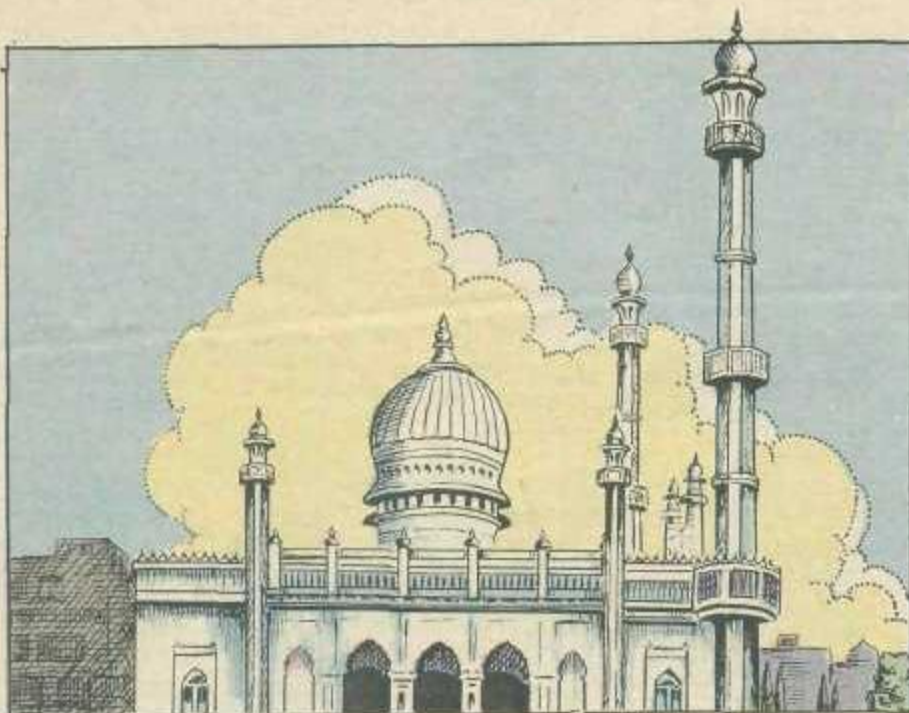
While it was announced that Yusaf was dead, the real Yusaf migrated to Hindusthan as a member of the merchant's party. The merchant looked after him well and educated him.



He grew up to become a handsome young man in India and joined the service of the Sultan of Bidar. He rose higher and higher in position and was appointed the Governor of Bijapur. In 1489 he assumed the title Adil Shah and declared himself independent.

The Adil Shah Sultans were great builders. Of all the monuments built by them, Gol Gumbaj, of course, is most famous. Its dome is the second largest in the world. In its whispering gallery, the echoes of a single person's steps will sound like those of an army!





The other remarkable monument of Bijapur is the Jami Masjid, the principal mosque in the city. Its construction had begun during the time of Ali Adil Shah. The floor of the mosque is divided by small black lines to accommodate 2,250 worshippers.

A huge cannon famous as Malik-i-Maidan or the "Master of the fields" dominates the western ramparts of the city. It has witnessed many battles at Bijapur and elsewhere.



One of the tombs that did not house its proposed occupant was built by Afzal Khan, a general of the Bijapur Sultan who went to suppress Shivaji. When the two met and Afzal tried to throttle Shivaji, the latter tore him with the 'tiger claws' in his fingers. Afzal was buried near the scene of his death.



A Folktale from Hungary

DOGS FOR GOLD

In days gone by Hungary was ruled by a wise King named Mathews. He was kind to all, but strict enough to check any mischief by anybody.

In a certain village, far from the capital, lived a money-lender named Marcony. He not only exploited the poor, but also found great pleasure in harassing or humiliating them.

One day Marcony was returning from the capital when a poor farmer of his village named Luke saw him. The farmer took over the heavy bag Marcony was carrying just to give the old money-lender some relief.

"The bag is quite heavy—as if there is gold in it!" observed Luke.

"How correctly you have guessed! The bag contains nothing but gold!" said Marcony.

"Good God! Where did you get so much gold, Sir?" asked the innocent Luke.

His question put a novel idea into Marcony's wretched head. He said, "I can tell you if you keep it to yourself. The King is looking for dogs. I led a dozen or so stray dogs to him and got this gold in exchange for them."

Luke asked, lowering his voice, "Sir, you know how poor I am. Will it do if I too carry some dogs to the King?"

"Why not? The King is in need of still some more dogs. Carry two or three to him and earn some gold. But you must



put on some good clothes and shoes if you wish to meet the King!" said Marcony.

Marcony was ready to buy Luke's milch cow—his only source of income at that time—of course at a concessional price! Luke was in need of money urgently, after all.

With the money Luke bought a pair of shoes and a set of clothes. He then collected two stray dogs and proceeded to the capital.

He was stopped in front of the palace. When he told the guards that the King was in need of dogs, they burst their spleen, laughing.

That brought tears to Luke's eyes. But it so happened that the King who was enjoying fresh air on the terrace heard the laughter and became curious to know what the matter was. He called Luke inside and heard everything. He immediately gave him some gold and told him, "Don't tell anybody about this transaction."

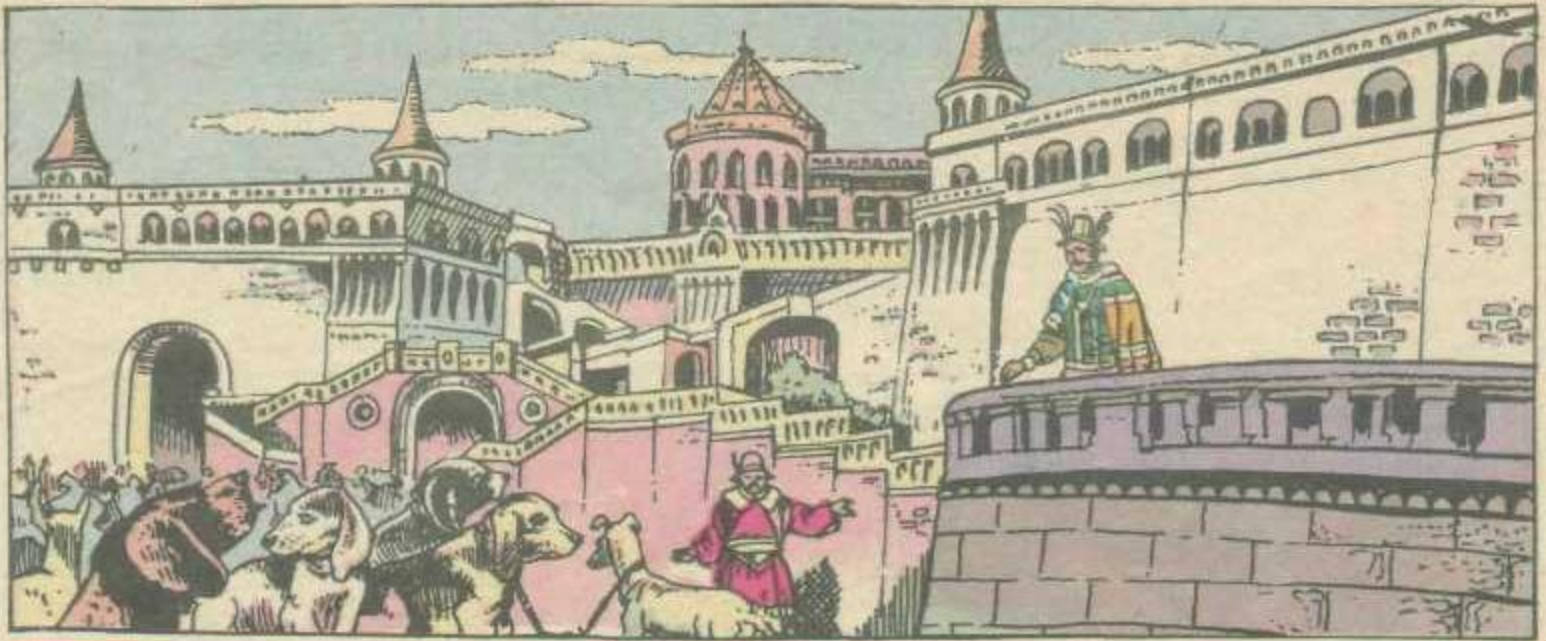
"My Lord, kindly allow me to tell at least Marcony, for it is he who passed on this secret to me!" said Luke.

The King agreed to this, charmed by Luke's innocence.

You can imagine how surprised Marcony was to find Luke returning with gold. "I never knew that the King could be really in need of dogs!" he said to himself. He then spent all the money he had and started buying dogs. The villagers thought that he had grown crazy. They had no reason to be kind to him. They quoted fancy prices for their dogs. Even then Marcony bought them.

By the week-end he had collected a hundred dogs. He hired some assistants and proceeded towards the capital.

The guards in front of the



castle were surprised to see an army of dogs invading the capital! They did not let Marcony to enter the palace. Marcony argued with them loudly. The guards shouted back louder. At that some dogs barked. The next moment all the dogs were barking or moaning.

The King came out to the terrace and asked Marcony what he wanted.

"My Lord, I have dogs to sell. Don't you remember how eagerly you bought two from Luke? I have one hundred with me," said Marcony.

"Thanks. But I needed only two. You may sell your dogs elsewhere," said the King and he went away.

"Now, get out as fast as you can or you'll be arrested for making the city dirty with your dogs!" ordered the chief guard.

Marcony returned home a very sad man. By and by people learnt about the episode. They laughed at him and he was sadder.

But, yes, he had grown wiser too. He never tried to amuse himself at someone else's cost!

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A KING'S QUEST

Vijay Varma, a King of Shri-pur, was a man who was always eager to know more and more about the world, about human nature and all such things.

One day, while taking a stroll in the garden, he heard one of his courtiers telling another, "It is difficult to find as good a man as our King!"

The King suddenly turned to them and asked, "Why do you call me a good man?"

The courtiers fumbled. One of them said, "Well, Your Majesty, you help the poor and the needy without any hesitation!"

"I do so because I have money and facilities to do so and it is my duty to do so. Goodness is something different," said the King.

"My Lord, you are neither proud of your position nor rude to anybody," said the other courtier.

"To be proud or rude may be bad, but not to be proud or rude is not a special virtue. It is just normal quality of a man. Why should I be proud of my position? I was born a Prince and so I became a King. Had I been born in a peasant's family, I would have been a peasant. And what right have I to be rude to anybody? All are human beings like me!" said the King.

The courtiers had no answer to this. The King kept thinking on the question the whole night and could not sleep.

"What's the matter with you?" asked the Queen.

"I'm wondering what makes one a good man!" said the King.



“No single rule for measuring goodness can apply to everybody. But if there is goodness in a man, you can feel it only when you see him in his natural condition,” replied the Queen.

That appealed to the King. The very next day, in the evening, he and his minister put on disguises and went out. At first they peeped into the court-poet's house. The poet's disciple was serving the poet with food. But the plate he placed had not been thoroughly wiped.

“You proud chap! Have you lost your sense of duty because some fools think that you are more talented than I am?”

The disciple apologised and wiped the plate again.

The poet's sick wife cried in agony.

“Shut up! Only four days of fever and you cry like a babe! What a fool I was to marry a good-for-nothing woman like you!” shouted the poet.

“Good God, he looks so gentle in the court!” remarked the King.

The King and the minister moved away. They stood near the court-physician's house. They heard the physician telling his son in a low voice, “My boy! Let us not tell the King that you have discovered a sure cure for asthma. The King will ask you to distribute the medicine among the patients. That will bring us no special benefit. Let us sell the formula to the physician of the neighbouring country. He will give us ten thousand gold coins!”

“But, father, that will be wrong!” protested the young man. “The King gives us money for our research!” “You are a fool!” Commented the physician.

The King and the minister soon reaches the outskirts of the

town. They saw a tired farmer returning home. They peeped through the window and saw the farmer asking his wife anxiously, "What happened?"

"While drawing water from the well, I slipped and fell down. My right arm has swelled. I have not been able to cook for you!" said the woman in a voice of regret. "I also broke the earthen pot!" she added.

"Never mind the pot! But you must be feeling pain in your arm! Wait. I'll make some hot water for you. Formenting will bring you relief. And I know a bit of cooking too!" said the farmer and he set himself to work.

"Why were you late today?" asked his wife.

"I wanted to sell my grain. But our merchant came late. Meanwhile another merchant from the neighbouring kingdom met me and offered a higher price. But I refused to sell my grain to him," said the farmer.

"Why?" asked his wife with some surprise.

"Because the other merchant will take the grain to his own kingdom and then sell to our



people with greater profit. Our people have to pay more. I knew his business. That is why I did not oblige him" explained the farmer.

The King smiled and whispered to the minister, "We have met three good people—the poet's disciple who we know is more talented than his master, but who is so humble, the physician's son and the farmer both of whom our patriots! Our mission has been rewarding!"

The King made the poet's disciple the court-poet and the old physician's son the court physician. He rewarded the farmer with more lands.

"AS HEADSTRONG AS AN ALLEGORY!"

(Till today Grandpa Chowdhury answered questions put to him by Rajesh and Reena. From this issue he begins answering questions on language sent by our young readers.)

Jamuna Prasad of Patna wishes to know what is *Malapropism*.

Malapropos (Mal-a-propos) means out of place or inapt. Sheridan (1751-1816) the famous English playwright, created a character named Mrs. Malaprop in his play, *The Rivals*. She was notorious for making blunders in her speech. In place of the necessary word she used a word similar in sound but quite irrelevant in the context. She says, "As headstong as an allegory on the banks of the Nile," when she should have said (if at all) as headstrong as an alligator. Instead of saying obliterate, she says, "Illiterate him, I say, quite from your memory."

From this character the English language got the word *Malapropism*. Always there are people who occasionally practise Malapropism. Mr. Norton Mockridge quotes a number of examples of Malapropism from recent speeches of people. One says, "My father is retarded on a pension." Another says, "The English language is going through a resolution!" You surely understand the mistakes!





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Saat Swaad Mein

Lijjat
papad

IN SEVEN TASTY CRUNCHY VARIETIES

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What is meant by Ecological Destruction?

*Member of Abhiyatri Club,
Howrah*

Ecology is a branch of biology which deals with the relationship between the living creatures and their environment.

The term Ecological Destruction today mainly refers to the irresponsible, arbitrary and selfish manner in which man is cutting down the forests and demolishing the hills. Such destructions have grave impact on our climate, the cycle of seasons, our river system and our animal wealth. Those who are destroying forests or demolishing the hills do so for their immediate need and profit. They do not care for the future. Once India had great forests. With their disappearance, the pattern of rainfall has changed. That has resulted in drought and scarcity of even drinking water. The disappearance of forests on the hills have loosened the rocks. That has resulted in greater landslides. More earth come down and fill the river-bed. That makes the flood-water engulf greater areas, so on and so forth.

When you grow up and take up responsible positions in the society and the Government, you must do everything possible to stop this wanton destruction.

Readers are welcome to send such queries on culture, literature or general knowledge which should be of interest to others too, for brief answers from the Chandamama.

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no political fortunes, yet...

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PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



I. Uma Rani



S.G. Seshagiri

Can you formulate a caption in a few words, to suit these pictures related to each other? If yes, you may write it on a post card and mail it to Photo Caption Contest, Chandamama, to reach us by 20th of the current month. A reward of Rs.50/- will go to the best entry which will be published in the issue after the next.

The Prize for February '87 goes to:—
Sudha Subramanian, Plot No. 47, B-Block, Vasavi Colony,
Wellington Road, Secunderabad — 500 003.

The Winning Entry:— "Pensive Musing" & "Joyful Posing"

PICKS FROM THE WISE

All things change, nothing perishes.

— Ovid

It is best not to swap horses while crossing the river.

— Abraham Lincoln

Sometimes it is a good choice not to choose at all.

— Montaigne

The Superfighters



His fans call him the 'Little Master'

The world knows him as a super batsman.

But Sunil Gavaskar says, "I'm a Superfighter. And I want my son to be one too. Which is why I've started teaching him young. With Forhan's Fluoride toothpaste — the Superfighter against cavities".

Bacteria act on food particles. And release

acids that cause cavities. Forhan's Superfighter has active Fluoride that hardens tooth enamel. To resist acid attack.

And Forhan's exclusive astringent tightens gums. To give teeth a stronger foundation and longer life.

Over to Sunil. "I give my son Forhan's Care. Do you?"



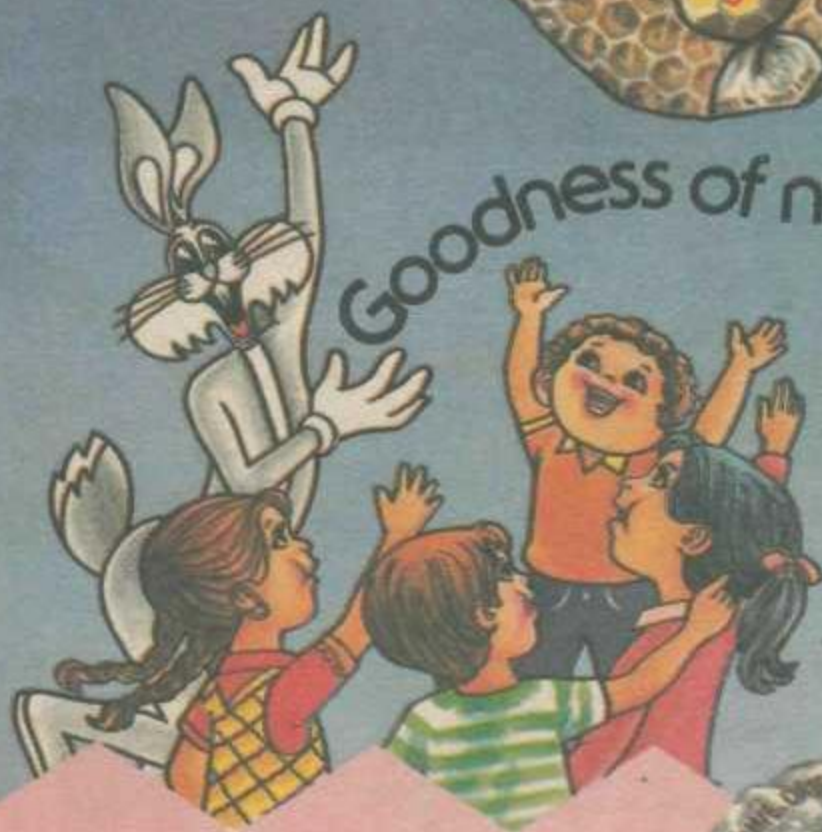
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RAM & SHYAM

IN THE TRIBAL EXPERIENCE

PARLE

RAM'S AUNT AND UNCLE LIVE ON A BEAUTIFUL ISLAND. RAM & SHYAM ARE INVITED TO SPEND THE HOLIDAYS WITH THEM.

BEING INQUISITIVE, THEY SET OUT TO EXPLORE THE ISLAND. AS USUAL, MUNCHING POPPINS ON THEIR WAY.

JUST THEN...
ARROWS? BUT WHY?

THE TRIBALS MUST BE SCARED OF US.

TO SHOW WE'RE FRIENDS, WE'LL THROW THE ARROW BACK WITH A PACK OF POPPINS ATTACHED TO IT.

LIKE A JAVELIN, SHYAM THROWS THE ARROW WHICH PIERCES A TREE.

SLOWLY, THE TRIBALS COME OUT OF HIDING AND PICK THE PACK OF POPPINS. THEY POP ONE EACH AND SEEM TO LOVE THEM.

JOYOUS, THEY RUN TO RAM & SHYAM AND HUG THEM IN FRIENDSHIP.

OUR DEAR FRIENDS

WHEN RAM & SHYAM HAVE POPPINS, YOU CAN BE SURE THEY'LL NEVER RUN OUT OF FRIENDS.

PARLE POPPINS

Lickable. Likeable. Lovable.

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